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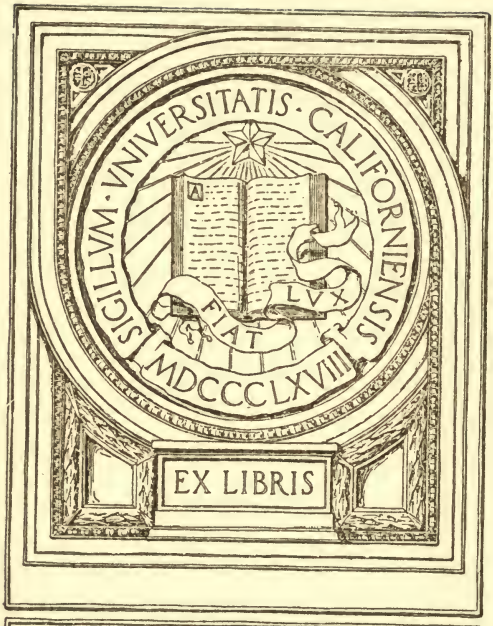
THE CHATELAINE OF LA TRINITÉ

HENRY B. FULLER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THE CHATELAINE OF LA TRINITÉ

THE CHATELAINE OF LA TRINITÉ

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

BY

HENRY B. FULLER

AUTHOR OF "THE CHEVALIER OF PENSIERI-VANI"

NEW YORK
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CALIFORNIA

The Chatelaine of La Trinité

I.

NEUCHÂTEL: LAKE-DWELLERS, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

THE Chatelaine of La Trinité had laid her parasol on the churchyard's rugged little parapet, and her glance, ranging across the red-roofed town beneath her and the shimmering lake beyond, now rested fondly on the long line of snow-peaks that faintly finished the prospect toward the south. No sound mingled with the odorous freshness of a serene June morning save the jolting of a single wagon over the stony little street far below, and the decorous diversions of half

a dozen children under the big walnut-tree that rose from the grass-plot before the cathedral door. Neither of these, however, had interfered with her brief inspection of the shiny little red book which she still held in her hand, and which she was just on the point of passing back to her companion with a smile that was more or less arch, and which a shade of deference prevented, perhaps, from being a trifle quizzical. This person, a young lady whose general effect was that of bright and restless elegance, took back the volume with the least show of embarrassment, laid it on top of the parasol, and, giving the Chatelaine a quick interrogatory glance, seemed to put herself unreservedly into her friend's hands. She had purchased the book three days before in Paris; it contained a list of acceptable inns, a sectional map capable of being extended far beyond the cover inclosing it, a thoughtful essay on Alpine geology, and other features of interest to the conscientious and determined tourist. But Miss West now promptly and definitively renounced it, with an instant apprehension that the Chatelaine had tacitly undertaken to make any such commonplace assistance superfluous. And this, in effect, was what the Chatelaine's smile really amounted to. She lightly threw the book of ready reference aside, picked up her parasol again, gaily extended it toward the long-drawn panorama of the Bernese Oberland, in discreet burlesque of that didactic person through whom pointer and blackboard complement each other, and proceeded to an immediate redemption of her promise.

Now, as a matter of fact, the learner — who had come through the Val Moutier only yesterday, and was to-

tally guiltless of Switzerland, aside from the Jura—might have got much the same instruction from a certain mute mentor within the town itself; for there is a quiet old quay in Neuchâtel, bordered by a row of ancient, high-bred mansions, and shaded by a generous growth of chestnut-trees, where a sturdy little brass-plated dial enjoys a close intimacy with all the points of the compass, and faithfully indicates the name and quality of every peak that rears itself above the low foot-hills that close in the lake on its farther side. But Miss West, of course, knew nothing as yet of this fount of information; besides, what platform could be more advantageously placed than her present one, or what pedagogue more capable and sympathetic? So the voice and the sunshade of the Chatelaine went on in perfect accord and understanding as she marshaled the whole snowy host with conscientious exactitude: the Mönch, the Eiger, the broad-bosomed Jungfrau; the Breithorn, the Schreckhorn, the Wetterhorn, the Finsteraarhorn; Mont Blanc, the serrated Dent du Midi, the sharp tip of the Matterhorn; and finally, best and grandest of all despite its sixty miles of distance, her own Mountain. And her eye sparkled, and her manner took on an added warmth, for beneath those spreading snow-fields stood her ancestral home, and in her mind's eye she saw again the high and rugged valley where her ordinary courtesy title took on a tinge of actuality, and through whose confines she swayed it, in a certain modest, graceful fashion, as chatelaine indeed.

All this time a sedate, serviceable, middle-aged person was pacing with a kind of steady shuffle along

the walk at the back edge of the plateau, whence she varied an occasional glance toward her charge by a comparison of the twin spires of the church as they rose before the huddled roofs of the château just behind, or by now and then taking a sidelong glimpse, through the battlements of the wall she grazed, of the foundations of the château itself, as they rose from the vineyards that covered the slopes of the ravine; and to her it became apparent, as the Chatelaine stepped hither and thither with her firm, springy, self-assured tread,—Miss West following with her wavering high heels and her rattling passementerie as best she might, —that something, out of sight, indeed, but still at just the present moment more engrossingly interesting than anything actually *en evidence*, was the matter that her young mistress had set herself to elucidate. The matter was simply this: the Chatelaine's godfather, the Governor, had a little plantation between Morat and Avenches,—a trifle of eight or ten acres,— where, in such intervals of leisure as his scientific employments permitted, he engaged in the cultivation of Roman antiquities; and it was her effort precisely to locate this interesting tract, which was shut out from view by the range of hills separating the Lake of Morat from the Lake of Neuchâtel, that thrust out the Chatelaine's arm and brought such an expression of painstaking peering to the face of her guest. And when, as her guest, this young American had been received on the previous evening in one of those dim, fatigued, reticent old mansions down there on the edge of the water, the Governor, winding his way into the dusky drawing-room through numerous cases filled

with specimens and preparations, and gazing down upon her with the benevolent interest which the professor is sometimes observed to show for his subject, had told her of his little farm and its perennial crop of antiquities, and had assured her of the pleasure it gave him to be able to start their brief course of instruction so nearly at the beginning.

This kindly old gentleman, who was ending his life at Neuchâtel, had spent the beginnings of it at Potsdam and Sans-Souci amidst a certain circle whose extreme altitude I must leave to your conjecture. He had considered himself born to *la haute politique*, and one of his early efforts, more daring than discreet, had ended in a banishment, more or less honorable, to Neuchâtel, then under Prussian rule. But even in this circumscribed field political activity was practicable enough for him; he harassed a succession of North German governors with suggestions and advice, and once, on the occasion of a sudden and unexpected interregnum, himself held the château a few months as acting governor. For all this, however, he never wore the title officially, and he was seldom addressed in such manner to his face; but any one who had a point to gain, or an ax to grind, never lessened his chances of success by whispering behind the old gentleman's back some such word as, "Yes; but would this please the Governor?" or "Perhaps so; but what will the Governor say to anything like that?" He might properly have been called the Professor; but when it comes to a question of title the one bird in the bush may be preferred to any number in hand.

The Governor might have returned to Berlin years

and years ago, but Neuchâtel pleased him well enough; besides, where was the ideal cosmopolite to be found if not in a German with French affiliations? In the governor's chair he had attempted a military severity, and in his correspondence he was inclined to aim at an acidulous wit—Frederick and Voltaire rolled into one, you understand; but, when all 's said, he remained simply a genial old gentleman, with an inordinate fondness for butterflies and a keen relish for his joke. In earlier years—years when he had regarded himself as quite a piece on the board, years a backward glance toward which almost revealed him to himself in the murky guise of a conspirator—he had been accustomed to read all the most ponderous political publications of the Continent; but in the course of time he tired, as everybody must, of those journalistic Jeremiahs who saw the heavens falling every time two emperors came within fifty miles of each other, and most of his reading of late had been of a lighter nature. He had a sympathetic familiarity with most of the comic sheets from "Kladderadatsch" to "Punigolo," and found them, he declared, quite as trustworthy as the more serious ones, and infinitely more amusing. And if, as the years rolled on, the politician was overshadowed by the naturalist, it was not that he loved man less but nature more, and his conspiracies against the powers that be were diverted toward the Power that immemorially has been. He delighted in the insect world—when the insects were impaled in rows and correctly labeled; he exulted in the winged creation—when the creatures themselves were properly stuffed and mounted; he was overjoyed to bask

in the great smile of nature—when that smile could be modified a trifle by the use of a little geological hammer. And the Chatelaine, who had passed an educational youth at Neuchâtel, and had accompanied her learned relative on many a scientific tramp, was as familiar with the various implements employed in the cosmical toilet as was the old gentleman himself.

Now on this very morning, and at the precise time when the Chatelaine was giving Aurelia West her introduction to the Alpine world, the Governor, with a crumpled letter in his hand, was pacing his library in a state of extreme excitement. This letter had come from the steward of his little inclosure on the Lake of Morat, and though the Governor's reading of it caused the immediate summoning of his chief neophyte from his own study, yet it is gratifying to recall that on receipt of it he was entirely alone. For within two minutes after tearing open the envelope he had abandoned himself to an ecstasy of joy such as might have been considered extreme even in one fifty years his junior. While he did not actually jump out of his slippers, he did give his head a triumphant wag that sent his skull-cap tumbling to the floor; and he started in a rapid walk to and fro through the big room, keyed up to a pitch of excitement that made him all regardless of a certain succession of reflections in the long mirror at the end of it—a fortunate circumstance, since where there are no eyes there is no spectacle, just as where there are no ears there is no sound.

As I have said, the Governor's cultivation of Roman ruins was carried on within a mile or two of Avenches; and Avenches is simply the ancient Aventicum, the

capital of the Helvetii, the city beloved of Vespasian, and the most considerable of the Roman settlements in Switzerland—the tale of whose amphitheaters and temples, and basilicas and towered walls you will find told, since you may never meet the Governor personally, in any reputable work on Swiss antiquities. Well, the Governor read this old volume from the classic past, and read it very carefully; then he reread it; then he began to edit it, with emendations and annotations; and at length the day came when he felt himself impelled to add an appendix to it—an appendix, like the original work, in stone and mortar. And the material for this was close at hand. If you have ever spent any time around Neuchâtel you may recall some of the more striking peculiarities of the Jurassic formations. A little scrambling over the Chaumont, or even a ramble on the slopes above St. Blaise, will show you how readily these rocks, block-shaped and lichen-grown, may take upon themselves the aspect of the antique, or even of the prehistoric. Heap a hundred of them upon one another in separating two pastures, and you have the relics of some human habitation antedating history. Pile another lot a little more liberally and judiciously and with a little more of conscious art, and you produce a something which the alert and sympathetic mind has no difficulty in connecting with the first historic civilization known to the land. And the mind of the Governor was a mind of this order. Beginning in a somewhat tentative way, he came in the course of a few years, with the help of a kindred spirit, a fanciful young stone-cutter at Morat, to be the possessor of

such an array of baths, barracks, villas, and temples, —overlapping, outcrowding,—that only one other tract of equal size in all the world, the Roman Forum itself, could parallel this instance of infinite riches in a little room.

One year Aventicum Novum would be a wealthy and favored suburb of the older and larger place, when villas would spring up and spread around, and bas-reliefs and mosaic pavements were likely to develop. Another year it would be simply an extreme military outpost from which to keep a sharp eye on the aborigines on the opposite side of the lake,—a state of things calculated to produce little beyond barracks and mile-stones. On a third year the same quarter was likely to be given over to the worship of some particular divinity especially affected by old campaigners; and to such a period as this was due a certain temple consisting of two and a half Corinthian columns and an ell or more of entablature; and along with the temple went a single strayed pine which had been partly persuaded, partly coerced, into a semblance of the flat-spreading Southern type, as well as a fractured marble bench set in a bower of laurel. You will judge from the Governor's temple that most of his edifices consisted of ninety-nine parts of imagination to one part of reality—a proportion that I would most earnestly recommend to any propagator of ruins. Indeed, one who is unable to see a complete basilica in a short, low ridge of battered masonry hardly rising above the surface of the ground, or to pave an entire forum in the course of one forenoon, should avoid this particular department of husbandry.

During this current season the Governor's energies were bent on nothing less than a *marmorata* on the edge of the lake,—a wharf at which the stone used in the construction of Aventicum the Elder had been landed after a rafting across from the shore below Mont Vully. To confess the exact truth, the Governor's purpose here was less esthetic than practical; he wished to enlarge his little property at the expense of the shallows before it, and he hoped that the building of a suitable landing-place might come to make Aventicum Novum an occasional port of call. Operations had been going on for two or three days with a greatly enlarged force of workmen, as many as five being occupied at one time—a necessary increase when the manual part of the undertaking so nearly equaled the imaginative part of it. And it was the director of this little force who had sped those startling tidings to his master in his library at Neuchâtel.

On receipt of these tidings, the Governor lost no time. He shook off his dressing-gown, shrugged himself into his street-coat, called loudly for his hat and gloves and walking-stick, detached his chief disciple from a case of beetles, and with him sallied forth. His first impulse was to find his confrères at the college; his second led him in search of the Chatelaine. She would know, would feel, would sympathize. For when you possess a little foothold on a lake in western Switzerland, and when your men report that excavations have developed rows of rotting piles deeply embedded in the slime and marl of the shore, it means one thing, and only one—lake-dwellings. Let him but communicate this simple fact to his godchild, and her

mind would start up into the same throbbing activity as had his; like a rocket her thought would rush forth over a hundred yards of narrow, spindling causeway to explode brilliantly far out above the water in all the coruscations that must envelop a newly discovered lake-village through the imagery instantly conjured up in the scientific mind when fired by fancy. She, too, would instantaneously drive down a hundred thousand tree-trunks—oak, beech, fir, all trussed and wattled, which would quickly become overspread with a broad acreage of rude planking, which in turn would be covered over with a layer of beaten earth and embedded gravel. From this platform a multitude of huts would rise, built of brush and saplings, smeared over with clay, and roofed with bark and straw and rushes. The cattle would be stabled between, and the free-running pigs would feed their fatness on acorns and beechnuts. The women would grind their wheat and barley between their mealing-stones, and each would bake her cakes and boil her bison-rumps on her own hearthstone. The children, tethered by the foot to a post, would angle through the trap-doors for turtles, or twiddle derisive fingers at the wolf or boar that peered hungrily through the twilight from the strand; the hunter would toil over the causeway with his spoil of stag, or urus, or auroch; the husbandman, on the main, would mind his wheat-field or his sheep-fold; the potter, with wheel or without, would pile up his product of jar and pipkin; the weaver at her clay-weighted loom would manipulate her hunks of flax; and the worker in skins, or arrow-heads, or fish-hooks would pursue his industrious way. Then some careless

maid—oh, joy!—would let slip a bowl or jug through a chink in the rude flooring, or an impatient artisan would hurl a faulty hatchet-head far out over the water, and each would fall, and sink in the marl below, and wait there patiently three or four thousand years for a worthy old antiquarian to come into his own. And his new guest, instead of starting in with Roman readings in one syllable, might now begin with the very A B C of Swiss history, as rightfully she should. Such images as these churned in the Governor's excited brain as, accompanied by his secondary sympathizer, he rustled through the town and scaled the height behind it in search of his primary one.

But what pleasure is complete? The Governor, panting and perspiring, told off the last step of that stony incline, and gained the turf and shade of that churchly little rectangle only to find the field already in possession of another. This was a lithe, graceful, self-assured young man of twenty-five, whose manner seemed a perfect epitome of urban elegance, and whose fantastic costuming, blossoming into every sort of vernal wantonness, affronted those serene presences across the water with a jauntiness that approached blasphemy. Or so it seemed to the good Governor, whose balked impatience was hastening on to the discovery of other affronts more deadly still, when Miss West presented the new-comer as the young Fin-de-Siècle; the Count, she hastened to add, with a certain accent of complacent relish, was just twenty-four hours from Paris. The Governor found it impossible to maintain a complete rigidity before this suave and smiling young man, and therefore unbent sufficiently

to present his own companion, the Baron Thus-and-So, mentioning one of the oldest, most famous, and most unmanageable names in all Tyrol, a name which for ordinary use the Governor unceremoniously metamorphosed into "Zeitgeist." The Baron Zeitgeist wore Tyrolean grays and greens, and had hastily slung a *jägerhut*, with one curling cock-feather, across his blond head; and the Governor, whose eye, indeed, was not altogether dimmed to pictorial effect, thought that this was as far as any young man need go when posturing before the Alps.

The Chatelaine had not yet recovered from the shock which had come to her with the dawning of this brilliant Parisian apparition beneath the shadowed arch of the church door, and to the Governor the sight of that bright and knowing face lit up a million gas-jets in competition with the blessed light of day, while every footfall of those dapper boots helped to spread a field of asphalt over the green churchyard turf; but Aurelia West had often seen the like before, and she lost no time in demanding of the Count, with an aggressive audacity, and a seeming consciousness of the superfluity of the question, what he was doing in Switzerland. Well, he was there as a fictionist; he was picking up material. This he said with the air of a man who thought one answer would do as well as another. No interest, he declared, was equal to the human interest. And humanity was never so interesting as when at a disadvantage. And it was never more at a disadvantage than when amusing its leisure; nor at a more supreme disadvantage than when this leisure found it disporting before the great front of

nature. He looked calmly around the little group, waved his hand in a businesslike way toward the Jungfrau, and presently retired into the shrubbery to jot down this little string of epigrams. Not every one would think them worth saving, but the appreciation of values differs, and they were saved, and appeared in print in Paris in the autumn. I simply mention this fact here because the "Étude d'une Âme" may never have come to your notice.

The Governor, who inwardly confessed himself a little put out, but who hardly fancied himself as figuring to any great disadvantage, opined that for this sort of note-taking their own quiet little town might not be so good a field as Lucerne, for example, where a brass band might be listened to on the Schweitzerhof Quay, whence the Rigi might be ascended for the sunrise, and where, as he understood from the prints, Mlle. Pasdenom, also from Paris, was shortly expected to open out with an Offenbachian repertoire on the stage of the Casino. This last chance shot found lodgment somewhere, for the Count, a trifle dashed, hastened on rapidly to another set of reasons. This time he was merely winging his flight across a corner of the country on his way down to Italy; he was going to see his friend, the Marchese of Tempo-Rubato, who had a hunting-box in the mountains above Bergamo, and his father, the old Duke of Largo—everybody knew the Duke. All this, and much more, to Miss West; and that young lady, thankful to have gone no farther beyond bounds, and inwardly resolving hereafter to keep within bounds still more circumscribed, astutely started out on a little course of

thought quite her own. For one thing, she should beware in the future of any reason that seemed too plain, too simple. For another thing, she should certainly hear the band play on the Schweitzerhof Quay.

If Fin-de-Siècle, during his winter's acquaintance with Aurelia West, had given that undiscriminating young woman more admiration than respect, he was now bestowing on the Chatelaine a considerable degree of respect, no particular degree of admiration, and an insufferable degree of curiosity. He began his note-taking on the churchyard terrace with all the ardor that a new type inspires, and he continued it on the steamer deck, as they sped in all haste toward Morat, with an absorption that thrust landscape and antiquities equally into the background. The Governor had collected his little party with the least possible loss of time, and his satisfaction as to its composition was complete; for among the group of quiet, suave, well-fed old gentlemen aft was his great confrère and rival, Professor Saitoutetplus, whose complacency since the discovery of a lake-dwelling or so on his own frontage near Cortaillod had been a thorn in the Governor's side for many a year past. And the others, if less prominent as landed proprietors, were equally eminent as scientists; every one of them, at some reunion or other, had laid his "paper" on that dusky damask table-cover of the Governor's, and had contracted his eyebrows to stop the tinkling of the prisms on the tarnished candelabrum at his elbow. And now they sat there together on the shady side of the paddle-box, conversing amiably enough, but ready at any moment to sink the friend in the con-

troversialist with a suddenness and completeness that would throw a stranger into a panic of apprehension. But the friend, although he sank, never failed to rise again; and the Chatelaine, when contentious voices began to rise, knew that conversational life-preservers were close at hand, and gave no evidence of being in any great degree disturbed. She, with the other young people, was well up toward the bow; and thus the *Hirondelle*, with youth at the prow and learning at the helm, sped on her way.

The Chatelaine, whose wardrobe was doubtless small and simple, wore for this excursion just what she had worn upon the terrace — a gray woolen gown, a small bonnet of brown straw, not altogether unlike a poke, and a garment which I venture, with some diffidence, to term a pelisse. To have called her aspect archaic would have been unjustly severe; yet to have called it wholly unfashionable would have been quite within the bounds of truth. But as this strong, serene, cool-eyed young woman trod firmly from one side of the boat to the other, her glance ranging freely over lake and mountain, and her head raised finely to catch the freshening breeze that swept athwart the bow, Aurelia West could not but speed one shaft of envy toward this young creature set so high that she was able to ignore all current conventionalities and yet become in no degree absurd. As soon request the Alps themselves to change their robe of snow and pine-boughs according as the "taste for nature" might wax or wane or vacillate.

Meanwhile Fin-de-Siècle pursued his inquiries with an unabashed directness that a complete gentleman

might well have hesitated to employ. When he learned that the Chatelaine's idea of dissipation was San Remo, he felt that he had made a point; when he discovered that her ideal of splendor was Geneva, he felt that he had made another; when she said that she had never witnessed a real dramatic representation, he squeezed his own elbows in ecstasy; and when she avowed that little in her reading had been more recent than "Paul et Virginie," he was almost charmed into silence. The Chatelaine was able to meet all his inquiries with serene composure, and at the same time to give some heed to the painstaking little profundities with which the young Baron Zeitgeist was trying to chain the wandering attention of Aurelia West; and once, too, when a group of peasant girls, who were attired in the sober holiday finery of the district, and who sat huddled together in an obscure corner not far away, began modestly to croon some old folk-songs, she added her own voice to theirs. Zeitgeist had been in America, as he had lost no time in informing the new arrival on meeting her in the Governor's salon, and his talk referred to a time and place quite other than the present. So did the talk of the Governor's friends, occasional bits of which floated now and then to Aurelia's ears. But she was giving very little heed to either the one or the other. Now and then she heard a word of the stone age, indeed, and again of the bronze age, and again of the age of iron; but she herself knew only one age—the age of flesh and blood. To the Chatelaine, of course, the proper study of mankind was antiquity; but from her own point of view the proper study of mankind was man, and

the particular man now in her thoughts was the one who had followed her, or some one else, from Paris.

The steamer had now left the Lake of Neuchâtel, and was bumping on, as best it might, through the narrow channel of the Broye. The motion had become too violent and irregular for the singing peasantry, and they lapsed into silence. The steamer presently jarred against a scowful of mowers whose work grazed the edge of the stream; a boy who was knocked overboard from the stem of the scow was brought up by a big boat-hook, and only the intervention of the officer in command prevented the boarding of the *Hirondelle* by a horde of angry agriculturists. A quarter of a mile farther the boat grazed bottom, and a rod beyond this it stuck fast, and nothing but the straining, writhing, pushing, and shouting of the entire crew made the accomplishment of the trip a possibility. But none of these minor mishaps had cast a single drop of water on the flames of controversy now raging among the savants of Neuchâtel. The Chatelaine, looking back, observed that her godfather was quite red in the face, and that the worthy Saitoutetplus was moving his umbrella in a fashion totally foreign to the usual manipulation of the olive-branch. Monsieur was being requested to recall how it had turned out not merely at their own Concise or Yverdon, but also at Wauwyl, at Wangen, at Robenhausen, where by no chance could the potter's wheel have been employed. And again, would monsieur be pleased to remember that the jar had not been found in the peat itself, but in the first stratum beneath it—a consideration that rendered necessary a reconstruction of the

entire theory. But, on the other hand, the *cher professeur* must not lose sight of the important fact that the jar had been clearly shown to contain not carbonized acorns, but beechnuts, which permitted an entirely different interpretation of the matter. Meanwhile the Chatelaine watched for the appearance of Morat's high-set castle-tower, with its pair of attendant poplars, and, seeing them, felt that deliverance was nigh.

Morat, rising steeply from behind its frontage of ruined sea-wall and its rounded clumps of willow, is a compact, bustling little place, and as picturesque, in a hearty, downright fashion, as a purely Protestant town can be. For a touch of the pensive and forlorn thriftlessness that the Church may bestow our friends waited for Estavayer, which had a place in the circuitous route that took them home. But Morat possesses two features which even the most troublesome esthete must appreciate — an inn which offers at once a good dinner and a good view across the lake from its high back windows, and a town-wall which, more than any dinner, must make the mouth of the discriminating visitor water. Our friends despatched their lunch in the big public room, crowded with a jostling, good-natured fair-throng, and then, in deference to the visitor from over sea, made a little excursion on the wall, a tiny semicircle of less than half a mile, all told, with a huddle of steep roofs within and a fine spread of gardens and open meadows without. It is a rugged old fabric, broken through by a dozen awkward towers, and covered for its whole length with a rude peaked roof that rests on a rough timber framework, set with wabbling lines of coarse old tiles;

but it deserves a place among the minor promenades of Switzerland, it is so authentic, so accessible, so abounding in pleasant and ever-shifting glimpses of lake, town, mountain, and country-side.

But the Governor's impatience over Aventicum left very little time for any other place, and his guests presently found themselves seated under his famous old pear-trees near the Temple of Mars, while his chief Roman was offering them by way of refreshment the choice between gooseberries and buttermilk. Then they were shown the remains of the basilica of Aulus Perfidius, whose treachery to the Roman cause, as explained by Zeitgeist, was the reason for the removal of a good part of this structure in favor of a barrack for the Thirteenth Legion: a row of *cippi* commemorating various members of that body now formed a border for the asparagus-bed. They saw numerous other novelties and rarities, and on the way home they stopped at Payerne to glance at the old Benedictine abbey, from the broad archway of which half a hundred shrill-voiced school-children were being scattered broadcast, and to look in at the old church where the saddle of good Queen Bertha is to be seen, with its hole for her distaff. And they took time at Estavayer, while waiting for the homeward steamer, to run over the causeways and through the courts of the fine old brick château; and they glided into the port at Neuchâtel as the stars were coming out and the dews were making it worth while to feel a new seat before taking it; and Aurelia West was fain to acknowledge to the Chatelaine, as they walked home along the darkling quay, that not for many a day had she been more

completely filled with panorama, medievalism, and classicality.

But the lake-dwellers? Yes, yes—that is a question I can answer; but it is one that I had hoped you might forget to ask.

Well, none of us need to be told that a single whiff of real fact may quickly dissipate a whole bushel of antiquarian chaff. And all of us can understand that the humbler the fount of information the harder it is to gulp down its gushings. There are certain features connected with that afternoon at Aventicum Novum which the Governor never cared to linger on, and which were never afterward referred to in his presence. The plain facts are these: the Governor's steward had a father; this father, an octogenarian down in a cottage by the shore, had a memory; and this memory was able to connect the work of the lake-dwellers with certain work of his own lost both to sight and recollection for fully fifty years. That was all. The Governor's fancy had gone up as rockets do, and had come down as rockets will; and now, when the worthy Saitoutetplus is minded to take a bit of a stroll among the lacustrine relics at the college, he does it without the company of his friend.

The Governor, before returning to Neuchâtel, left directions with his steward—the same to be forwarded at once to Morat—for a handsome sarcophagus in which suitably to inter a young lady whose biography he had just improvised, and with whose monument he wished to begin a prospective Street of Tombs. The name of this fair unfortunate was Julia Placidia, and she had accompanied her father, the commander of

the Thirteenth Legion, from Rome. The general, who was no great novel-reader, was at a loss to understand why his daughter should have insisted upon following him to so remote and inhospitable a region; but we of this modern day know without the telling that she was secretly attached to one of her father's subordinate officers, a very handsome and promising young man. The Governor hesitated whether to make the cause of her death pulmonary or pectoral; had she died of consumption or of heartbreak? Most of the young people—so near to the end of the century are we come—pronounced in favor of delicate lungs, but the old gentlemen from the college pleaded unanimously for a broken heart. I do not know what decision was reached, nor, indeed, whether the inscription specified the cause of her demise at all, my Latin is so indifferent; but be that as it may, the soft-hearted young sculptor at Morat was able to give to the sarcophagus the last refined touches of pathetic mutilation, and the untimely taking-off of this fair young thing filled the Governor himself with a pensive complacency for fully a fortnight.

II.

THE JURA: BOUND TO THE CHARIOT-WHEELS.

AFTER the obsequies of Julia Placidia the Chatelaine and her friends set about the recovery of their spirits by means of a series of little fêtes and excursions, not too hilarious and not too suddenly begun. They started with a sedate ramble over the heights of the Chaumont, and they continued with a little run, partly by rail and partly on foot, up through the glories of the Val de Travers. One day came a picnic on the grassy slopes above the towered and gabled old manor of Cornaux, whence the Lake of Bienne, along with red-tiled Neuveville and the inviting Isle of St. Peter, spread out a soothing little

sonatina in quietly blended blues, reds, and greens; and on another day they betook themselves up to La Chaux-de-Fonds to spend a few hours among the watchmakers, much to the delight of Aurelia West, in whose breast the shopping instinct, like hope, sprang eternal, and in whose eyes the pleasant peculiarities of the Jura landscape had not yet lost their charm. And in the course of a week they had so far left their grief behind as to attempt a quiet little fête in the prim old garden behind the Governor's house. They summoned hither half a dozen shy young students and a corresponding number of straight, self-conscious maidens,—the daughters and nieces of professors,—and attempted a bit of dancing *en plein air* to the music of a flute, a violin, and a violoncello. The 'cello was manned by Zeitgeist, and the flute was looked after by the Governor himself, who would have resented the least imputation of rheumatic finger-joints as the worst of insults; and the efforts of both were directed by the violinist,—a townsman and a professional,—a nervous, elderly little man whose interest in the occasion rather overshadowed the deference that he should have shown to such distinguished amateurs, whose slightest slip he rebuked and corrected with Draconic severity. The Governor was brought to book half a dozen times or more, and at last was smilingly obliged to confess himself rather out of practice; but Zeitgeist, whose instrument was his constant traveling companion and in almost daily use, escaped with merely a rap or two. Miss West, who had observed the peregrinations of the 'cello with some amusement and little less concern,

once made bold to ask its owner why he had not chosen something smaller; but she learned promptly that nothing else could quite meet his particular requirements. The violin was too shrill and shrieking; the viola was too robust and rampageous; only the soulful sonority of the violoncello could give adequate expression to his passion and his pain. But to the Chatelaine there was nothing that required special comment in the journeyings of that big green bag; for more than once she had seen an unwieldy sitz-bath bumping its way up the Nicolaithal to Zermatt, and last year she had made the acquaintance of an elderly *Anglaise* who had carried a parrot in an enormous cage all the way from Plymouth to Pontresina and back again.

The days went on quickly and pleasantly, and Aurelia West was pleased to find herself slipping more easily and more completely into the round of cheerful serenities that marked the course of life at Neuchâtel. This was not precisely what she had come for, but it would be agreeable enough for a few weeks, after the distractions of Paris and the diversions of the Riviera. It was on this southern shore that the two young women had first become acquainted, during a month passed between Mentone and San Remo, and the Chatelaine had left La Trinité for Neuchâtel in order to meet her guest, as I may say, upon the threshold. Yet, while the Governor's little fêtes and excursions had half rubbed the Rue de la Paix from her memory, and had jostled the last Battle of Flowers two or three degrees along the road to ancient history, still they had not done much to quiet the feeling of doubt and sur-

prise and general uncertainty which rose and fluttered whenever she looked back on that day's journey of hers from Paris to the Alps.

She had made the journey alone. When I say "alone," I use the word in a narrow, technical sense; she was accompanied by no friend, no relation, no chaperon. The relatives in whose care she was to have gone were obliged to give up their idea of Basel at the last moment, and to this independent young woman the eight-hour trip across France by daylight did not present itself as an undertaking of any extreme difficulty. But as for company unrelated,—company in the plain, ordinary sense,—she had enough and to spare, as you shall see.

She had made all her arrangements to depart with the éclat proper to one of the colony who was so fair, so young, and of a position so assured. Her costume was distinctly in the mode, and that mode at its highest. Her traveling-wrap was in a large, light plaid, which, even in the piece, looked striking enough; her hat showed a width of brim and a wealth of adornment that more than met the necessities of the case; and the handle of her parasol was incredibly long and ornate. Still, whatever her aunt may or may not have said, before or after, there was nothing in her get-up —as she invariably insisted when looking back upon this curious day — that was not completely justified by the plates in "La Mode Illustrée." Her bags and other belongings were equally modish, a dozen people of consequence had assembled at the Gare de l'Est to see her off, and nothing in the world had been wanting to give her departure the proper effect except a minute

or two of time. But a wretched accident had delayed her five or more, and when her uncle hurried her through the *salle d'attente* to the platform, a dozen apprehensive friends, who had bought tickets to the first station out that they might pass the guard, had given her up; the porters were running along swiftly as they slammed the doors of the carriages; and her attendant, wrenching open one of the compartments, had only time to push her in when the train started, even before she had found her seat. No bon-bons, no flowers, no hand-shaking, no kisses; but as the train pulled out she was solaced by a momentary glimpse of a traveler more unfortunate still. A young man—a *boulevardier*, it seemed—came struggling through the crowd with a new portmanteau in one hand, an immense bouquet in the other, and an evident intention on the carriage before hers in his every movement. His figure seemed familiar enough, but his hat was jammed down over his eyes and nose. He stumbled and fell. The portmanteau burst open. The bouquet flew to pieces. What became of the youth himself she had no time to see. Nor was she disturbed by the spectacle which her uncle presently offered to those remaining behind—rushing after the train with outstretched arms, as if to to drag it back by main force, and finally being carried off to the wait-

ing-room to quiet down and to pull his scattered wits together.

She found herself in a third-class compartment; it was none too clean and it was very crowded. The occupants were both men and women—about half and half. They were not old, nor were many of them exactly young. None of them, taken singly, would have caused a second thought, perhaps; but their associated effect was peculiar. In the mass there was a singularity of attire, a curious, intimate, democratic, though half-smothered, familiarity of association, and a certain noticeable sameness in physiognomy not to be overlooked. Nor did they, on their part, ignore her own attire and physiognomy. They scanned her, studied her—men and women both—with a stealthy, furtive, insistent interest which presently began to annoy and even to alarm her. After a little time one or two of them spoke to her, and with a certain civility; but it was a civility that came more from policy than from good will. And before long they showed less of civility and more of a sense of restraint and injury, and she began to feel that she was the discordant element. This discovery pained her; she had no wish to act as a wet blanket on anybody's holiday. But doubtless these good people would be getting off after another five or ten or fifteen miles, and if she could stand it, they might, too. But they did not get off after five or ten or fifteen miles. They went on as long as she did—and longer.

Presently sounds of joy began to issue from the compartment next behind. There were two or three shrieks of laughter in high female voices, and the tones

of a big bass voice, which must have proceeded from a head thrust out of the next window, came bawlingly into hers. Then there was a noise as of some one pounding on the partition close to her head with a bottle—a sign of greeting, as it seemed, to the people locked in with her. She started; but of those around her more frowned than smiled, and she realized bitterly that she was a kill-joy indeed. A large, round-shouldered man, who had not shaved himself that morning, and whose taste in neckwear she could not approve, sat opposite her. He was humming a jerky little tune under his breath, and was accompanying himself by strumming on the window-pane with a set of fingers adorned by a large and valueless ruby. At the first stoppage he ceased his impatient exercise, left the carriage, and forgot to come back again. And a woman, whose oily black hair was laid in great scollops against her temples, and whose full throat was encircled by a coarse-meshed collar of dubious point, looked after him as if she would like to follow.

The forenoon wore on, and other stops now and then gave Miss West glimpses of other passengers. The most conspicuous of these were certain gentlemen—quite a number of them, too—who were dressed in an exaggeration of the prevailing mode, and who were most active whenever a stop gave easy access to a restaurant or a buffet. They carried little glasses of cognac or kirschwasser, or anything else that offered, and their steps invariably led them to one particular carriage—the first or second ahead of her own. She saw them again and again; and presently it occurred to her that none of the old passengers were leaving the

train and that no new ones seemed to have boarded it. Many of the station-masters, too, were showing an interest more personal than was common to that indifferent gild, and this interest followed close on the convoy of kirschwasser and cognac.

The hours dragged on wearily and uncomfortably enough. They passed Nogent, Troyes, Bar-sur-Aube, and in due time they reached Chaumont, where there was a longer wait than usual. Here she saw the window-strummer on the platform, and noticed that he was pointing to her compartment. And presently one of the bearers of kirschwasser came walking down past the long succession of open doors, and paused at hers. He wore a dark, pointed beard, his trousers-legs had the sensuous, undulating swing so dear to the Parisian tailor, and his collar displayed the low cut so beloved by artists of a certain circle. He carried a little glass of liqueur in a hand on which the manicure had exercised an exaggerated care, and he offered his refreshment with a smile whose intent was that of the most attentive assiduity. As he approached her the women opposite bridled most self-consciously, and when she drew back with alarm and offense so plainly in her face that he could only retire with a stare and a shrug, her traveling companions finally lost all patience with her. The people in the next compartment were trolling the drinking-song from "Giroflé-Girofla" with a spirit and precision that quite surprised her, and now the people in her own threw off all restraint, and joined in with them.

She retired into her book, and the loosened tongues around her began to do a little wagging. They talked

brokenly, abruptly, of a variety of things that she found herself unable to follow; it seemed to be the phonetic shop-talk of some established but exceptional profession. They spoke now and then of "la Duchesse." Once a reference to this personage was attended by the throwing up of a thumb over a shoulder in the direction of the carriage ahead, and Miss West found herself wondering whether it was the Duchess whose thirst was so unquenchable and required such constant ministrations. Presently one of the women stooped down, thrust her hand under the seat, and pulled up a package of sandwiches and a bottle of *ordinaire*. She studied the situation for a moment, and then, with a manner which she could not make non-committal enough to meet her own views, tendered a share in these refreshments to our uncomfortable traveler. Miss West was hungry enough to accept food and drink even at the hands of a duchess's tirewoman or kitchen-maid, and it seemed to be the general sentiment of the compartment, as she bit into her sandwich, that she was coming to her senses.

At the next stop she ventured to alight and to take a few steps up and down, for she felt very tired, cramped, and uncomfortable. The deserter from her own compartment pointed her out to two or three of his fellows, who followed her movements with a curious interest, and now and then some other man from a higher social stratum seemed half prompted to the tender of some civility which in the end he reconsidered and withheld. She glanced along the train. There was one goods-van more than might have been expected from the limited number of carriages, and it

was noticeably larger than the average. Yes; the great lady, whoever she might be and wherever going, was moving along *en grande tenue*, and was carrying her whole household with her. But why not have added a few extra carriages to the train? Why compel one who was accustomed to the drawing-room to travel, as it were, in the kitchen? She looked toward the carriage that she fancied to be occupied by the *grande dame* herself, but the door was closed, and the kirschwasser was handed in through the half-curtained window by a garçon who came tripping out from the buffet, and who carried back a five-franc piece with the empty glass. How pitiful, thought Miss West, for an elderly lady to become so confirmed in such a habit; though, to be sure, almost every member of the aristocracy had some engaging little eccentricity or other.

The afternoon was wearing on. The long, straight white roads, and the long, straight, interminable poplar-rows of mid-France had been left behind some time since; the country had become broken, hilly, even mildly mountainous—at least there were suggestions of the mountainous that made the passing show worthy of more attention; most of the ducal retainers had dropped off to sleep, lying back in uncomfortable and unprepossessing attitudes; but from somewhere or other above the ceaseless click-click of the wheels came faintly and intermittently the squeaking notes of a violin. Then it seemed as if there might be two of them, and that they were running informally through a little passage in thirds and sixths; and presently above the dull b-r-r-r from the rails there seemed to

beat itself in on her fast-dulling ear a familiar snatch from "La Jolie Parf—La Jolie—La Jol—" She nodded, caught herself, the train slacked, and they were at Delle, on the Swiss frontier.

She decided to do what she could toward getting the Duchess and her vast establishment through the customs, and so left her compartment once more. But the examinations were not so searching as she had expected, nor was she herself as alertly wide-awake as she had judged; and but for a strong arm, dexterously exercised, she might have been left behind altogether. This arm belonged to a gentleman whom she had seen only once before during the day, but to whom she had assigned a high position in the ducal household—the eldest son, in all probability. He, as the train was moving off, seized her firmly, thrust her into the nearest open door, promptly followed her himself, and gave the door a slam behind them.

She found herself in a first-class compartment, comfortably spaced and luxuriously appointed. The velvet rug was littered with broken biscuits and crumpled rose-leaves, and four people already occupied the four corners: a lady, her maid, and two gentlemen, one of whom held a bird-cage containing a pair of tiny macaws, while the other was trying to amuse a pug-dog whose harness was set off with bells and blue ribbons. The third gentleman, her rescuer, signed her to a seat between the dog and the birds, and placed himself between mistress and maid. He was a man who was approaching thirty—he was twenty-eight, let us say. His aspect was one of richness and distinction; his manner had breadth, freedom, mastery. He seemed a

patrician who could hold his high estate, or lapse away from it and gain it again, all with equal ease, grace, and elasticity, and wholly uninjured in the opinion of himself or his associates. He had a devil in each eye; one was laughing, the other—not. It was the laughing one that flickered before Aurelia West as he presented her with an off-hand informality, difficult to describe or to endure, to the lady opposite her, whom

he simply designated as the Duchess. As to her own identity, that appeared to be understood by everybody, the Duchess included.

In this personage Aurelia West was surprised to find a woman not more than a year or two older than herself, though a first casual glance might have made her four or five. With her feet crossed she lolled back against the quilted head-rest in a costume in which Miss West found ample justification for her own. She

wore her hair in a bold, original fashion, which was much too eccentric and unauthorized for anything like imitation, and her elaborate complexion was applied with a careless frankness that only a very great lady would have dared to employ. She did not suggest the Faubourg St. Germain, by any means; but Compiègne, in the later days of the Empire, was not altogether beyond the pale of consideration. She turned a pair of big, dilated eyes on this new and sudden arrival, made an indifferent effort to extend a hand, and carelessly asked her, in an accent not completely Parisian, how she was standing the journey. Then, with an air of knowing everything and everybody and all about them, she brought back her wandering attention and chained it to her own personality. Her conversation was chiefly with the athlete who had made the immediate continuation of Aurelia West's Swiss journey a possibility. She addressed him sometimes as *cher Marquis* and sometimes as *caro Marchese,* and at irregular intervals she mumbled bits of Italian at him without turning her head. Her associates took as much for granted and gave as little heed; the gentleman with the bird-cage was the one who had made the offer of refreshment, and he gave even less. He ignored the newcomer completely, and Aurelia West began to feel even more uncomfortable and out of place than she had felt in her other quarters. She was tolerated only because she was there, and there unavoidably; and the more assured they seemed as to her identity the more uncertain she became about it herself.

They had left Porrentruy and its castle a few miles behind, and the scenery, now that they were fully

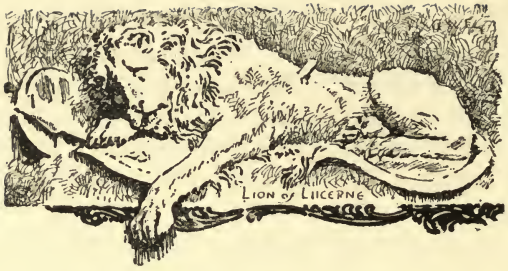
within the Juras, was taking on its most acutely characteristic aspect. And with this Aurelia West was fain to solace herself for the discomforts and mortifications of her present position as best she might. True enough, the outlook on the side of the bird-cage was closed, but the other side was free; and so between the pug and the maid she gazed out upon the rapid succession of heights and depths and crags and streams and fleeting shadows that marks this entrance into Switzerland. At Ste. Ursanne the train crosses loftily over the picturesque valley of the Doubs, and pauses long enough for a brief look at the quaint old town and its ruined castle set high up on a precipitous steep, and the suddenly doubling river winding far below between its craggy banks. Aurelia West was taking this first glimpse as an earnest of other glories yet to come, and she gave no great heed to the person who stood there with his hand on the carriage door in low-voiced conversation with the Duchess. He was of middle age, and his face expressed a fairly successful union of the practical and the esthetic. He looked, too, as if he had the weight of the universe on his shoulders—the universe plus the Duchess. And the Duchess was adding to the weight by a series of sharp, insistent questions. Where, for example, had he been all this time? Why must he bestow so much time on Mlle. La Rossignole and her needs,—was n't she old and experienced enough to look out for herself? And *why* had there been no kirschwasser for poor Chou-Chou back there at Porrentruy?—the little beast, meanwhile, thrusting out his pop-eyes and jingling his bells as if insisting on an answer, too. And why—

why was it necessary to have the new contralto in this particular compartment? Could no other place have been found for her? And how was anybody to get along with one so glum, so rude, so unsympathetic?

Eh, Mademoiselle, the new contralto? *Mais, oui;* surely a place *had* been found for her—one in his own carriage.

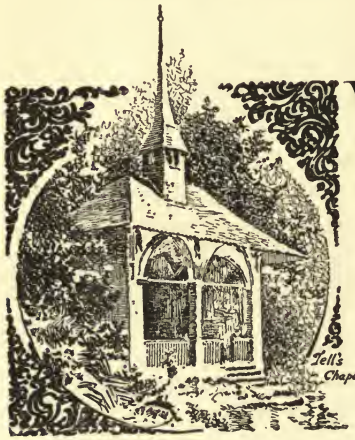
In monsieur's own carriage? Then who, *juste ciel!* was—? and his puzzled questioner shrugged her shoulder in the direction of the absorbed Aurelia.

There was an exchange of glances and a lifting of eyebrows all around. The man of affairs shut the door and hurried away, leaving his associates to adjust themselves to this altered state of affairs. The *prima donna assoluta* exchanged a few words with the Marquis in Italian, and Miss West presently found herself the object of a slightly increased interest. The less she belonged to them, the more, it seemed, they cared for her; and when they learned that her destination was not Basel, but Neuchâtel, their interest quickened a little more still. For in that event Mademoiselle must change at Delémont, and Delémont was barely ten miles ahead,—a change presently made to the easing of all involved. The gentlemen civilly assisted her to alight, her luggage was bundled out from her former quarters with a hearty good will, and as their train sped away in the twilight the words of a deplorable couplet from "Le Petit Faust" floated back from the raucous throats of a score of men packed in the last carriage.



III.

LUCERNE: THE TRAIL OF THE SERPENT.



WHEN the Governor submitted to the Chatelaine the itinerary that was to regulate the earlier movements of their little tour, she showed her instant appreciation of its ingenuities by telling him that it would never do in the world. For the good old gentleman, in his endeavors to evade the madding crowd, had avoided almost every center of interest. The Chatelaine admitted that Winterthur was, in-

deed, a dear little town, and that the Walensee, along with the Churfürsten, was just the spot for the poetical recluse; but their guest was not a poetical recluse, and would surely expect to see something of Interlaken, Zurich, and Lucerne, not one of which appeared on his plan. She assured the guilty Governor that Lucerne, in particular, was inevitable, and urged most reasonably upon her reluctant relative (who would have preferred purgatory outright to Lucerne in July) that it was better to dispose of this place at the start and have it done with—to check it off from the list before the full force of the season had begun to make itself felt. They had accordingly domiciled themselves with some friends up in the quiet suburban quarter behind the Hofkirche, and Aurelia West was thus enabled to indulge, without any delay to speak of, her insatiate appetite for music—the music of Lucerne.

Facilis descensus; and the Governor felt that to step from the Schweizerhof Quay to the deck of the steamer for Flüelen was but to pass from one circle of the Inferno to the next lower. This step they took on the morning of the day after their arrival at Lucerne; they were going through the worst at once, so as to have it over. But Aurelia West had, of course, not the slightest notion of the ordeal through which her kindly old host was passing, and her state, as she tripped along with the Chatelaine under the double row of chestnut-trees that shades the shore, was distinctly one of joy. Perfect weather, pleasant companionship, noble scenery—what more could mortal ask?

When their loitering along the quay had brought them to within thirty yards or less of the steamer, Aurelia West all at once noticed a group of half a dozen men disposed around a bench under the trees close to the point of embarking. Some of them leaned over the seat with their elbows resting on its back, and others lolled in cross-legged ease against convenient tree-trunks. At a short distance others still, not of the party, gazed on the scene with a kind of oblique curiosity, and several maids and matrons in passing looked in that direction, too, and then looked in some other. The center of this group was a lady seated on the bench,—a radiant, expansive, all-compelling personage,—and as she shifted her parasol to rap a set of knuckles whose hold on the back of the seat interfered with her shoulder-blades, Aurelia West recognized her as the *grande dame* of whose progress through the Jura she had inadvertently formed a part. The group of attendant cavaliers included one or two Englishmen, who wore knickerbockers and fore-and-afters, and who strove to appear very free and knowing; a Frenchman of the type she had encountered on the train a fortnight ago; and a figure which, in spite of its novel and startling guise, she identified as the marquis who had been so serviceable at Delle. He now wore a flannel blouse and spiked shoes; on his back he carried a long coil of rope and an ice-ax that threw off dazzlingly such sunbeams as struck their way down through the foliage overhead. His mien was very free, daring, noble, and careless, and many passers-by looked back on him with an awesome interest. Then another man, who had busied himself

in fastening up the dangling end of the rope, turned his face around, and our friends recognized in him the passing guest who had honored Neuchâtel for a day or more, and had then flitted away with a carelessly civil hope that they might some time meet again.

Fin-de-Siècle smiled brilliantly, and took a step toward them; but the Duchess, who had seen Aurelia West before Aurelia had seen her, laid her hand upon his arm, and detained him for a moment with a whispered phrase or two. What she said did not dim his smile, and he advanced upon our little party with effusion. He was delighted to meet them, and so soon, too. The Duchess had just told him that she was already acquainted with Mees West—charming, indeed. And she would be more than delighted to meet Mees West's friends. Ah, —the Chatelaine of La Trinité,— the Duchess des Guenilles,—the Marquis of Tempo-Rubato, whom Mees West had also met already, —Lord Arthur Such-a-one,—and so on, and so on.

The Duchess had straightened up her lounging Englishmen in a trice, and she met our two young ladies with her most careful manner. Her voice fell to a murmur. Her deportment became quiet almost to dejection. And when she looked up into the Governor's face with large, wistful eyes, and paid her dexterous little tribute to his worth and celebrity (she had never heard of him before, and knew but little of him except his name, even now), the flattered old gentleman had never felt more soothed or pleased.

And when she turned on Aurelia West with a remorseful little smile, naïvely poking holes in the gravel, off and on, with the tip of her over-vivid parasol, and murmured that her dear mees must have found her sadly cold and unsympathetic the other day, but that really such a long, hard journey made her something quite other than herself, the Governor felt that so much refinement, sympathy, and courtesy must be properly met. He recalled certain ornate phrases from his youth, the use of which might form a suitable acknowledgment; but these old-fashioned gallantries fell curiously on the ears of the sophisticated young men around him. They looked at one another slyly, and smiled; so the Governor's precise words I shall not give. You might smile, too.

The Duchess had no remarks to offer to the Chatelaine, and the Chatelaine had no replies to make to the Duchess. The Duchess did not once look into the Chatelaine's face, though she made one or two rather pitiful attempts to do so, knowing the eyes of her own circle to be upon her; but the Chatelaine regarded the Duchess, and all her friends as well, with a high and steady serenity, and without any sense of inconvenience. This, too, in face of the fact that she was apt to be more or less impressed by splendor, and was almost entirely at the mercy of any strong manifestation of modernity, a characteristic of which she herself had so slight a share. Indeed, it was the complete modernness of Aurelia West that had first interested the Chatelaine in this young Westerner, had afterward drawn her toward her, and, generally, had laid this poor young mountain maid under a burden

of awesome deference from which she was only now emerging. But the Duchess, though fully as modern as Aurelia West, and much more splendid, did not embarrass the Chatelaine in the least; and this young girl from the Valais, as she quietly scanned the eyes that could not raise themselves to hers, was (more than anything else) congratulating herself that she was able to meet the great world—as personified in this brilliant figure—on its own ground, and yet not feel at any disadvantage.

Tempo-Rubato was the only one of the Duchess's followers who accompanied the Governor and his charges on board the steamer. He was committed, as it seemed, to some indefinite deed of daring-do at the far end of the lake, and he appeared disposed to appreciate, in the brief time that intervened before his impending struggle with Nature in her own stronghold, the amenities of civilized society. He seated himself aft beside the Chatelaine with the air of a connoisseur who had examined almost everything that civilized society had to offer, but who was now impartially open to any new impression that chanced his way. He would indulgently forego his absinthe for a little sip of spring-water; and Aurelia West, whose enjoyment of the Pilatus and the Bürgenstock and the rest of it the good Governor had made more complete by a glass of lemonade and a plate of biscuits, had her enjoyment increased by noticing that the Chatelaine's talk to Tempo-Rubato was in Italian, and that he was unmistakably flattered by it. She taxed her friend for having concealed this graceful accomplishment, but the Chatelaine did not seem to regard

the command of conversational Italian in any such light as that. As she was situated, she smilingly declared, hardly any tongue that she could employ was likely to come amiss, though English, despite her years at Neuchâtel (beloved of adolescent *Anglaises*), she had never mastered. The Val Trinité, she further explained, was the one valley in the High Alps where German, French, and Italian were alike spoken, and she was obliged to meet her trilingual peasants on their own ground. They enjoyed it, and so did she. Tempo-Rubato was himself enjoying her Italian, which had several endearing little peculiarities of expression, and which showed a vocabulary not altogether at one with that of Rome or Florence; but he was too tactful to compliment her other than by the one supreme compliment of carrying on the talk with the same taken-for-granted ease and freedom that he would have shown within his own native circle.

Tempo-Rubato's talk went discursively, flightily, yet dogmatically, over a rather widespread field, and developed a number of sinister and heterodox points that pricked the Chatelaine with a vague alarm. While at Neuchâtel, the note-taking Fin-de-Siècle had touched lightly on his friend's characteristics, and had once referred to the possibility of putting him, as the phrase went, into a book. It had struck the Chatelaine that the propriety of using a friend in that way might fairly be questioned—one should be allowed, she thought, undisputed possession of one's own personality; but she was hardly recent enough, as yet, to understand that notoriety was the most delicate compliment that one modern could pay another. She

had listened, though, to Fin-de-Siècle's *précis*, and was therefore not wholly in the dark as concerned the make-up of the erratic personality now offered to her attention. His general attitude, it appeared, was that of opposition — opposition of the most refractory kind — to the old order as personified in the Duke of Largo, his father. This old gentleman was a most devoted son of the Church, more papal than the Pope; his son, accordingly, was a free-thinker of the most extreme type. The head of the house was the father of a family born under the prosaic circumstances of ordinary wedlock, as understood and practiced among us Occidentals; the son, therefore, was all the more open to impressions communicated from a certain Persian friend of his, a sojourner in Paris, whose calm assumption that any man was entitled to as many wives as he could support and manage, carried with it an acute fascination. This new disciple had not yet put his theories into practice by undertaking the support and management of even one; but discrepancies between thought and deed are too common for this particular one to be dwelt on at all lingeringly. Then, as Largo was an aristocrat of the stiffest and most exacting kind, so Tempo-Rubato's democratic propensities passed all bounds; and many of his friends had come to the conclusion that the only way to bring him to his senses on this point was to take him literally at his word, and to help to fetch him into close quarters, unrestricted by forms and boundaries, with the people itself. But to this final test he had never yet submitted himself.

The Chatelaine listened to his daring discursions

with considerable composure; they were quite remote from her own course of thought and action, seeming to belong to a world with which she had no special concern, nor was likely to have. She looked indifferently around over the crowd scattered about the deck, and gave an abstracted glance or two across the ruffled waters of the lake,—both the passengers and the waves giving the impression of changelessness in change proper to the Swiss season,—and her thoughts idly wandered back to the showy personage whom they had left behind on the Schweizerhof Quay. Who was she? how long had he known her? how had he probably become acquainted with her?—questions which she had no thought of asking, and which he would have hazarded some impropriety in answering, but questions that may be answered here properly enough.

He had first met her in Paris some four years previous; though she was not Parisian, as she loved to claim, nor even French, as she always would strenuously insist. She was of the Riviera, and, during a childhood which had stood considerable banging about, had strayed as far south as Naples, and even beyond. In course of time she turned up in Paris to try her fortune, and her fortune had begun, I am sorry to say, in no less reprehensible a place than the —but everybody knows its name. He had been principally indebted for this introduction to the painstaking but not infallible Fin-de-Siècle, who had dragged his new friend half-way across Paris only to strand him upon the empty inanity of a one-franc night. The big, garish place was almost deserted; a dozen

young *flâneurs* roamed about disconsolately, and two or three notable daughters of joy had looked in, but had disdained to exert themselves for the applause of such an audience. But a few others—beginners, amateurs, lights of the sixth magnitude—were doing what they could to keep the ball rolling, and among them was this girl, whom Tempo-Rubato eyed from the first with an absorbing interest. She had good looks; she had a grace of her own, though she was new; she showed as yet only the first faint trace of the insolent audacity that was to come later; and so, when the orchestra passed from a vulgar, jigging, irritating air to one of a different sort,—one that was free, fresh, rapid, undulating, that spun and turned and doubled on itself with a splendid and complicated insistency which suggested the possibility of perpetual motion, after all,—the young Italian bounded forward, murmured a phrase in his own language and hers, and in a moment more both were committed to a step to which the floor of the Closerie was all unused.

Fin-de-Siècle was instantly in an agony of apprehension, and would have drawn the rash young fellow back at once; he claimed to hold his finger on the pulse of Paris, and more than once had he seen imported originality launch itself on that treacherous floor only to struggle back through the breakers of polite contempt or open jeers. But Tempo-Rubato was not to be stayed by his faint-hearted friend, nor did his nobility feel the need of deference to the opinion of such of his contemporaries as happened just then to surround him. And he justified himself completely. On another evening the same place, in full

fête, might have repudiated him altogether; but on this particular occasion anything that served to fill in the unprofitable hours stood some chance of toleration, of acceptance, or even of applause. The novelty of the tarantella attracted attention from the first. Several youths, correctly dressed in frock-coats and high hats, had been looking on in contemptuous tolerance of a dance between a certain ill-assorted pair: a crass young fellow fresh from Anjou or Languedoc, who wore a cheap, ill-fitting salt-and-pepper suit, was throwing all the exaggerated enthusiasm of a novice into the series of senseless and disjointed flingings which he was directing toward his partner, a pale, thin, wearied young woman who wore a simple gown of brown silk, and who indulged at frequent intervals in a plainly audible sigh. There was nothing new in this, and the young men turned from the one dance to the other. A pair of merry little *étudiantes* who were rustling around with rich black silks on their backs, wicked little feather turbans on their heads, the ends of a skipping-rope in their hands, and evident intentions on a bulky and awkward Englishman in their faces, relinquished their middle-aged prey and crowded into the new circle too. Even a stolid *ouvrière* or so, such as occasionally appear at these places and dance with clumsy sure-footedness on the brink of evil, added their interest and applause to that of the others.

But to Tempo-Rubato, and to his partner as well, the onlooking circle was a matter of comparative indifference. When he had lightly thrown back the lapels of his coat he felt himself dressed out in ragged

sheepskin, and the lustrous hat that he had snatched from his head changed to a tambourine before his arm could even extend it. The hand that thrust back a straggling lock from the temples of his *vis-à-vis* had placed a striped and folded cloth above them, and the shake she had given to the disordered front of her gown had put a long apron there, wide-barred in barbaric stripes of color. As he danced around her with an indulgent and confident grace, the tired and callous musicians in shabby dress-coats became a band of blithesome, tangle-haired pipers; and when she in her turn circled about him, with increasing confidence in every step and a more open gratitude, the anemones of Pæstum burst into bloom all over the wide reach of the waxen floor, the low, painted ceiling rose to the height and semblance of the blue sky itself, the battered columns of Ceres and of Neptune advanced in stately fashion through flimsy panelings and tawdry mirrors, and the free, pure, blessed air of heaven seemed to blow abundantly and refreshingly through the tarnished atmosphere of the place. And when they had ended their performance he had given her a vogue.

That she could dance divinely was now patent, and presently it came to be discovered that she had a voice with five or six good notes in it. It was not a voice of any great strength or compass, but her articulation was particularly distinct; and she soon passed on to the "*Ambassadeurs*," where, in the rendition of couplets of a certain sort, a good articulation is of more importance than fine vocalization. Six months more found her at the "*Nouveautés*," where she began in

minor parts, and where, in the course of a year, she came to create a title rôle (that of the *Duchesse des Guenilles*) in an operetta which a great master—great as regarded that *genre*—had composed expressly for her. Then for two or three years more she had enjoyed an immense vogue, and now she was taking a little outing—half work, half play—*en province.* There were not wanting those to hint that the rising of a new star had dimmed her luster, and that she was clever enough to see when Paris could spare her. But such gossip was heard only in dark corners, and had no place in the general hubbub of adulation which accompanied her to the Gare de l'Est, and saw her off, in her own special train, to Switzerland.

All of these facts Tempo-Rubato was obviously barred from laying before the Chatelaine; besides, none of these things had any place in his thoughts to-day. He was merely refreshing himself with a draught of some simple, cooling beverage, and if he compared it with the spiced wines which had tickled his palate these past years, the comparison was largely unconscious. It was a fresh and primitive little drink, and went well enough with the crispness of the waves, the blue freshness of the atmosphere, and the stainless coverings of the lofty peaks around them. He looked into the clear, unclouded face of the Chatelaine, and smiled drolly as he realized that the rôle descending upon him required for its complete and sympathetic interpretation a horn, a huddle of sheep, an echoing rock, and a gaping traveler with a centime in his pocket. There was no Paris, no Rome; all the world was only one amphibious Arcady.

They separated at Flüelen. Tempo-Rubato moved onward toward the Bristenstock, while the Governor and the Chatelaine devoted a few hours at Altdorf to quieting Miss West's uneasy doubts about the historic actuality of William Tell. And in the evening, after their return, they accompanied her to the Kursaal, whither she was impelled by a strong but unacknowledged desire to test the actuality of Mlle. Pasdenom, whom she half suspected of having drawn Count Fin-de-Siècle from Paris, and who was on the eve of her first appearance in Lucerne. Before they reached the theater an instrumental clamor advised them that the overture was well under way, and they had barely taken their seats when the curtain rose, and the Chatelaine's first operatic performance was initiated by the spectacle of a dozen young — girls? — yes, girls, ranged across the stage in the dress and posture of scullions, who began to sing and to beat time on pots and pans.

The Governor was much taken with this auspicious opening; he had not seen an opera bouffe for twenty years, and he settled himself down to a study of the modern guise which this form of amusement has assumed. But Aurelia West saw no great novelty here, and before the first chorus was concluded she had taken time to make a hurried survey of the program. The name was easy enough to find. There it was in big, black letters — "Mlle. Eugénie Pasdenom." And Mlle. Eugénie Pasdenom would make her first appearance in Lucerne in the great part which she had created in Paris and had played there over a hundred and fifty times — the part of — No. No, no, no! Impossible, incredible, outrageous! It could

not be! But it could be, it was;—the part of the *Duchesse des Guenilles.*

She caught her breath,—again. She felt her cheeks; they were on fire. She glanced stealthily right and left at her companions, but they were both trying to catch the opening bit of dialogue that gave the clue to the situation. The situation, indeed! What was that situation compared with her own? The awfulness of this forced itself upon her instantly, overwhelmingly; and she saw in a flash what a blind, foolish, silly child she had been. Had she not read in the "Figaro" the day before her own departure that the Pasdenom was on the point of leaving for Switzerland by special train? And her uncle's nervous haste had bundled her on board of that train. Why had that odious man offered her that glass of kirschwasser at Chaumont? Because he had taken her for one of the troupe—some new member, perhaps, added to meet an emergency. Why had they been so uncivil to her in the Pasdenom's compartment? Because she had been so rude to him in the other one. And if some of them were actors, why not all of them? And if the "Duchesse des Guenilles" was but a name borrowed from the theater, who was that bold man on the steamer who called himself the "Marquis of Tempo-Rubato?" What marquises were there on the stage? There was the one in "Linda," but he was old. Was there another—younger—in "Madame Angot?" But that was no matter; the impudent fellow had presumed to bandy words with her Chatelaine. He had told her that he had a little *albergo* on the Lake of Como, where he should be in September, and that

if they came to find themselves driven that way by stress of weather, they would find, as the old formula ran, good beds, good wine, good attendance. And they had thought he meant a villa or a palace. A palace—yes; one like Claude Melnotte's—an empty nothing of stage scenery. And all his picturesque posing had been merely a full-dress rehearsal in open air, and all his compliments but the insolent persiflage of a player off on a day or two of leave. Ah! but that woman—that woman! She was likely to appear at any moment; she might be standing in the wings now waiting for her cue. Would she have the first entrance or the second? Might it not, oh, might it not be even as late as the third? Or could not some crowning mercy hold her off until almost the finale itself? How could she explain to the Chatelaine? What would the Governor think?

But Mlle. Pasdenom came on just as the exigencies of the piece required, and with absolute disregard of the feelings of the suffering Aurelia. There was a burst of harmony, a little more blatant than usual, from the trombones and the fiddles and the rest, and Aurelia, knowing full well what it meant, shut her eyes tight—tight. And when she opened them the star had stepped out with an airy boldness, and had taken possession of the stage and the house. Of her identity there could be no possible doubt; the distance was so short, the glare of the footlights so searching, that no costuming, however clever, could have concealed it. The one look that Miss West gave was enough, and for the rest of the time she sat with her eyes on the program, listening now and then to

mademoiselle's feint at singing, and judging from her searching accents that a good deal of broad, extravagant acting was going on. She knew that the Chatelaine and her guardian had made the same discovery, and she felt the movements with which each had turned toward her a look of inquiry that her own eyes had been unable to meet. Her heart was beating, her head was bursting, her eyes were on the point of overflowing, and when the curtain had descended on the hurly-burly of the first finale she asked to go. The Governor had more than satisfied his curiosity, the Chatelaine had not been much impressed by the merits of the performance nor by the tone of the place, and they all left at once.

On the following afternoon the Governor was seated idly on one of the benches in front of the Lion Monument. The place was chill and dusky, and a tiny stream of water dribbled dolefully down the scarred face of the rock. Presently a soft step came along the path behind him, and a little black hand lightly touched his elbow. With the black gloves went a black gown, a black wrap, a black sunshade, and a large jet cross — the full penitentials, as one might say, of opera bouffe. There was a large resignation in the eyes, and a touching little tremor in the voice. The Duchess had hoped that her new friends would be pleased to remain through the piece, since it was so difficult to do one's self complete justice in the first act of a first performance on a new stage; doubly difficult when the place was so small, the arrangements so familiar and impromptu, the audience so distracted by competing interests in the salons outside. If they

had given her only a few moments' grace, it might have come to seem quite credible to them that ladies of some consideration should more than once have complimented her upon her art, and have even expressed a desire to follow in her footsteps. Ah, well, she had never before appeared in the provinces; never, assuredly, in a mere spot for summer-gathering; the piece was taken less seriously than in the capital; there was a certain relaxation, a certain informality, a perplexing cosmopolitan commingling—too many targets to hit with one poor little arrow. . . .

She smiled wistfully in the good old Governor's face, and sat down on the other end of the bench.

But she was not complaining, he should understand, of her reception. No; that had been fair: not exactly what she had been accustomed to, but fair—fair. Still it was *triste* to be so far from home, to have none of one's associates about one, to miss the reassuring sound of a friendly hand at just the desired moment. It would take little, perhaps, to induce her to forego this Swiss tour even now; but, then, there was poor papa—

It was one of the Duchess's favorite fancies that a father, somewhere, was dependent upon her for support. The Governor knew that it was a very common thing to have a father, and he had no motive for refusing such an appendage here. He accordingly vouchsafed her a look of kindly sympathy, without considering too curiously the precise grounds for it. The Duchess, who always dressed her parts, no matter how she sang them, was now fluttering a little black-edged handkerchief in one pathetic hand. It was the grand opera that had always been her dream; but

what would you?—she could accomplish merely what her gifts permitted. Properly, one was to be judged not entirely by what one actually did, but in part by what one would wish to do. Why must she find a bar rigidly set for artists in her *genre*, when no great difficulties were made for others who, while on a higher plane, were less—should she say it?—less capable than herself? Why must she sometimes hear herself spoken of slightingly, disparagingly? Why, monsieur? Because she had allowed freedom and expansion for the growth and development of her own nature—like a blossoming branch reaching out eagerly to the air and sunlight. She had tried to preserve the natural sweetness and buoyancy of her nature; she did not mean to transgress; she had never done anybody any harm. . . .

The Governor gave a little gulp; he was sure of that—quite sure. But why should mademoiselle distress herself by such cruel self-questionings?

Suppose that, on the other hand, she had thwarted her natural bent and had dwarfed her growing nature through torturing attempts to conform herself to certain views which, after all, were merely conventional, or to hold herself to a certain standard erected by those who were in no wise inconvenienced by keeping up to it. She should then have soured her nature, embittered her spirit, made her friends sad, irritable, and miserable, and diminished the sum of joy in a world too joyless already. Who, indeed, threw a greater blight on life than those who were too good to allow others to be comfortable? Ah, monsieur, here was matter for grave consideration. . . .

The Governor blinked two or three times at the Lion, and cleared his throat to make some rejoinder. But simple silence was all that he could oppose to such a union of beauty, talent, and logic.

Was it too much to hope that he would accept tickets for that evening's performance? They would then see her in a piece of a somewhat different character,—a more sedate character,—a higher character, one might perhaps be pleased to say. Her associates would then have been refreshed by another day in his delightful country, would be more at home in the house; and his niece (as the Duchess guessed it) would then be enabled to form a more favorable opinion of the operatic art.

Here was firm ground at last, and the Governor placed his foot upon it without delay. It was impossible, dear mademoiselle; the young ladies and himself were to leave Lucerne in the morning, and they must devote the evening to friends in town. At another time—in Paris itself, perhaps—

The somber little figure rose to retire. She hoped

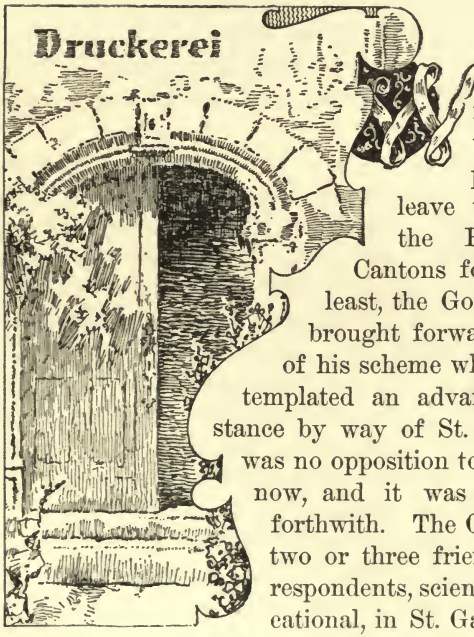
that Mees West felt the misunderstandings of that journey to be fully cleared away, and she hoped, too, that her best compliments might be presented to the charming Lady Bertha. Adieu, monsieur. She gave him her small, black-gloved hand, and then moved off with a head that drooped plaintively and eyes that studied the borders of the path. And the Governor, left alone, began to feel that there were situations where the margin between discretion and cruelty was very small.

And alone he remained for a quarter of an hour, wrapt in contemplation. He had been an admirer of the old school of acting—the robust, up-and-down school which left no doubt that it was acting; and the subtilties of the new school, in which the real and the simulated appeared to overlap, rather puzzled him. Had he witnessed an exhibition of nature or only a display of art? Had the woman been in earnest or in jest? But no answer came; least of all from his companion, who, perhaps, had retired asking the same question of herself.

But the Governor's statement of their future movements had been quite in line with the truth. Their lodgings looked down into the Kursaal grounds, almost, and Aurelia West had had her fill of music—the music of Lucerne.

IV.

CONSTANCE: SOME OF THE VICTIMS.



WHEN our friends found themselves prompted to leave the Lake of the Four Forest Cantons for a time, at least, the Governor again brought forward that part of his scheme which had contemplated an advance on Constance by way of St. Gall. There was no opposition to this project now, and it was carried out forthwith. The Governor had two or three friends and correspondents, scientific and educational, in St. Gall, and there would be plenty of interest in such directions to engage their attention. Then it assuredly would be an

advantage to their young guest to see the country in its ordinary, industrial, every-day aspect, standing on its own legs, and tramping sturdily along without adventitious help; she should learn that Switzerland was not altogether dependent for support and progress on the golden crutches that *les Anglais* placed under her armpits. They would hasten to that obscure but deserving corner of the country where every third abbey was a manufactory, and where every other castle had been made over into a seminary. They would do justice to a town which was too full of schoolhouses, libraries, museums, hospitals—yea, even deaf-and-dumb asylums—to have any room for promenades and kursaals.

This reactionary program the Governor put through with a grim thoroughness that spared no detail, and as the train which carried them away from Lucerne tumbled rapidly down to the pleasant shores of the Lake of Constance, at the rate of a hundred feet to the mile, the two young women made no effort to conceal their satisfaction and relief; and when they found themselves set down at length under the monastic cloisters of the Insel-Hôtel at Constance, they found that their reformatory guardian had carried the new order so far as to have led them out of Switzerland altogether. For they were now in Baden.

They dined daily under the vaulted ceiling of the old Dominican refectory, and they strolled at twilight in the conventual thickets that ran down to the water's edge. They loitered away one or two forenoons in the cool quiet of the cathedral, visited the antique hall that witnessed the condemnation of Huss,

and even made a pilgrimage to the spot where his martyrdom took place; and within a week Aurelia West had left all Gallic frivolity so far behind as even to make Mlle. Pasdenom's existence a matter of grateful doubt. In these various excursions, and others, they were attended by Baron von Habichtsgeb—no, it is too much—by Baron Zeitgeist, who was winging his way, with all his impedimenta, scientific and musical, from the Jura to the Tyrol, and who was more than pleased to find their paths thus crossing. For Zeitgeist was devotedly attached to the Governor, and he felt a very decided admiration, in his slow, non-committal way, for the Chatelaine; while he simply gloated over Aurelia West, whom he persisted in regarding, with no great reason, as he might have regarded some barbarian princess struggling upward to the light—one whose efforts to divest herself of the last shreds of barbarism, and to smooth out the wrinkles and creases of the just-donned garments of civilization, offered him opportunity for the last refining touches in his study of ethnography. Aurelia bothered herself very little about ethnography, but she enjoyed Europe, and had taken to it aptly enough.

Zeitgeist had a way of preaching big sermons from very little texts; and texts for him were always springing up everywhere, like wayside flowers. But the text that came to him in one of their morning walks through the embowered back streets of Constance was offered not by a single flower, but by a whole window-sill of them. This window-sill belonged to a humble little house, the doorway of which was festooned with vines, and was reached by a short path

that passed between banks of homely flowers. Above the door the word "Druckerei" was painted on the stucco of the mouse-colored front; and when Aurelia West noticed that Zeitgeist had taken off his glasses, and was thoughtfully rubbing them, she was able to interpret the sign. She knew something was coming, and she drew the Chatelaine back into the shade to wait for it.

But it turned out to be only a very little affair, after all. The Baron, while in America, had had occasion to visit one or two printing-establishments, and was simply about to request mademoiselle to accept this tiny shop as typical of the Old World,—the world of small things, the world of quiet and contentment and domesticity,—as distinguished from the noise, and grime, and bustle, and shrieking publicity of her own America. Where, in all her broad country, could anything like this be found? Where could she show a family pursuing its vocation with such a quiet content and moderation, such a complete regard for its own idiosyncrasies, such a tender respect for its own tastes and preferences? Suppose they entered: they would find no dimmed light, no fouled air, no grime and clangor, no hectoring overseer, no tyrannical and wrong-headed "union," no superfluous wear, tear, and irritation, no suppression of the graces and amenities of ordinary life for the mere sake of a "businesslike" appearance; and yet he would venture that they would find the work of the place adequately done. *Après vous, mesdemoiselles.*

The place was in charge of a wholesome, rosy-cheeked boy of sixteen, who came forward with the

pleased awkwardness proper to his age, and with whom the Chatelaine was presently talking in a free, off-hand way in his own native German. The shop had its proper outfit of type and forms and cases, and was as neat, orderly, and individualized as the foresight of Zeitgeist had anticipated. On a sort of little counter a few bits of work awaited sending out: a pile of carefully trimmed handbills betrayed the interest felt by a certain Bendel in *kalbsleber* and other commodities; and a hundred betrothal cards, deftly arranged in a little packet, foreshadowed, by the sample left on top, the coming bliss of one Wilhelm and one Margarethe. By the side of these a few small sheets of proof fluttered in the draft made by the open window, and the Chatelaine noticed, as she stopped to put them in better order, that the text was in French. And did he speak French, then? she inquired of the youth at her elbow. Yes, gracious lady; but this was the work of his elder brother—he and his father were both away to-day. The manuscript had been left there yesterday by a French gentleman who was staying at the Konstanzer-Hof, and who had wanted to see how these few pages were going to look in print. Our friends glanced from the proofs to one another, and when they encountered Fin-de-Siècle that evening on the Seestrasse, it was without any great feeling of surprise.

He came toward them dressed in a noticeable traveling-suit, his eyes on the ground and his hat over his eyes. The *âme* of which he was making an *étude* appeared to be in sore straits. All at once he stubbed his toe, and though he now carried neither a nosegay

nor a hand-bag, the departure from the Gare de l'Est passed once more before Aurelia's eyes, and she mentally registered a slip for which both the cup and the lip had now been found. She also privately confessed a little slip of her own: it was not she that he had followed to Switzerland. Nor was it the Pasdenom that he was now following through Switzerland. While surely, so far as the Chatelaine was concerned—

Fin-de-Siècle met the Governor, too, next day, and frankly avowed that his new theme was one full of interest; it was growing within him every day, and he had now come to the point where it was necessary for him to overflow in ink merely for his own relief. Nor was he backward in spinning a few more phrases as to the aims, materials, and method of his art. His plan, of which he seemed exceedingly proud, was simple enough—close observation, accurate transcription, nothing more. But the observation of his school, monsieur, was more than close; it was searching—yes, it was even remorseless; it spared nothing, since everything served its purpose equally. And when the master transferred the image from his mind's eye, and fixed it on those quires and reams of sensitized paper, with what cool dexterity, what calm, scientific precision, was the feat accomplished! No passion, monsieur, no preferences; above all, no fancy. The masters did not aim at romance for this generation; they were preparing historical data for the next. They were not devisers of trifling tales for an idle hour; they were erecting the pedestals due themselves as the leaders of a vast movement. Fiction was the great art of our day, as was music in the days of Mozart and

Gluck, or painting in the days of Lippi and Ghirlandaio, or architecture in the great days of Chartres and Amiens.

The Governor had read a good many tales in his time, but he had never taken quite so top-lofty a view of the art of story-writing; and he had an idea that the self-consciousness that busied itself with the rearing of its own pedestal was not altogether likely to be set upon it by a perverse posterity. And he said so rather tartly. In fact, the second advent of this young Parisian had not given the old gentleman any great pleasure. Nor had his first, for that matter; but then that had had the saving grace of novelty, at least. In truth, here on the quay at Constance, the Governor was not so certain of not appearing to disadvantage as he had been on the terrace of Neuchâtel, for Lucerne had intervened. Nor did he feel at all sure that Aurelia West's haphazard association with Mlle. Pasdenom had justified those headlong and promiscuous introductions on the pier—introductions that had enlarged the circle of their acquaintance by so many dubious additions. So he was accordingly disposed to be severe on something, even if that something were only a theory of fiction. It seemed to him—and he spoke with the slow laboriousness of one suddenly called upon to formulate the unconscious assumptions of a lifetime—that the great thing in art was not to know, nor even to feel, but to divine. Observation was good, assuredly; sympathy was better, even indispensable: but what, after all, was to be placed before the exercise of the constructive imagination freely working its own way on to its own end?—an imagina-

tion that seized on a word, a gesture, a flower, a flash of color, a simple succession of sounds, and by means of a few humble, external facts called out from within such a multiplicity of correlated fancies as resulted at last in a drama, a fresco, a symphony, a cathedral. The genesis of a work of art was the genesis of the echo; one word is spoken and twenty are evoked in reply—only no reverberations were to be looked for from empty nothingness. Or, if fiction must be scientific, let it look to the method of the naturalist, who from a single bone reconstructs and vivifies a complete animal. It was well enough to hold the mirror up to nature; but let it be a compound mirror—one that reflects, and re-reflects, and reflects again till the prosaic outlines of the original subject are increased, strengthened, multiplied, surrounded by the glamour of new presentations and new combinations, and the bare simplicity of the primary image loses its poor identity in the fused intricacies of a thousand secondaries.

Fin-de-Siècle listened with an indulgent pity to these antiquated sentiments, in which he detected the same old insistent note of a false romanticism which he was now quite tired of combating. He merely remarked that there was one respect, indeed, in which the coming fiction might well imitate the picture, the symphony, and all the rest. Now, one's apprehension of a picture was practically instantaneous; one might get a very fair idea of a great church, outside and inside, within ten minutes; one might follow the whole course of a symphony in twenty or thirty; in the case even of a drama one might become familiar with it,

outline and detail, in two or three hours. But with a book! — to become familiar with *that* required two or three days, or a week, or a fortnight, or a month, as the art of the writer and the interest of the reader determined. The idea of form suffered, the sense of proportion was dulled, the congruity and cohesiveness of the idea were impaired. No; he himself should never publish a book that might not be completely got around during one afternoon in a garden, or in a single evening over the fire.

The Governor had no objection to bring against this, having seldom read a book that seemed too short. But he had no more idea of following up Fin-de-Siècle's notion than Fin-de-Siècle had shown of following up his. So he merely asked the young man if his work could be carried on satisfactorily in the stir of a large hotel during the height of the season.

Fin-de-Siècle replied that, while he preferred taking his chances with a first-rate theme in a crowd rather than with a second-rate one in solitude, still he was obliged to acknowledge that his situation was not all that could be wished. The Governor came to his aid with a suggestion. A friend of his, a gentleman of means and of high scientific attainments, had a delightful place not more than ten miles outside of the town, where, during the season, he was accustomed to receive a limited number of *pensionnaires*. The house was a veritable château, and the large grounds were delightfully placed above the shores of the charming Untersee. The family was most agreeable, though rather numerous; yet an author of scientific fiction would know how to use the eccentricities and idiosyn-

crasies which a wide relationship was sure to embrace, while for a fortnight of quiet retirement no place in the world could be better. He would speak a word in that quarter if his young friend thought he cared to make the experiment. His young friend thought that perhaps he did; the Governor spoke the word; and when he learned that Fin-de-Siècle was actually domiciled at Thorheim he smiled a sly, derisive smile that it were not well to see. This young man was in search of humanity appearing at a disadvantage; well, his wish would be gratified.

But the distance between Constance and Fin-de-Siècle's retreat was only a matter of a few miles,—a distance that could be covered by rail, or boat, or carriage, and the Governor saw more of this young master than he had hoped to. During one of his early calls at the Insel-Hôtel, Aurelia West, who could now think of opera bouffe with something like equanimity, told him that she was sorry their stay in Lucerne had been too short to see his friend the *marquis* in any of his parts; she hoped for an opportunity to become better acquainted with his talents after her return to Paris. Fin-de-Siècle's reply to this was prefaced with a sudden, arch, surprised, insinuating smile, and he regarded her with such a marked increase of consideration as only one thing, she felt, could account for: he must be crediting her with some special, intimate, narrowly restricted information in connection with certain phases of *la vie de Paris*. Her guess was close, for he murmured with a great effect of secrecy that it was a thing really not to be alluded to. As a matter of fact, Tempo-Rubato *had* appeared a dozen times or

so on the stage of the Folies Dramatiques; but, indeed, such things were scarcely to say themselves—it was all under the rose. Had she ever heard him sing? Oh, but he sang—a magnificent baritone. Had she ever seen him ride? He rode like a devil; he had learned in Amerique du Sud,—had she any friends there?—where the Duke owned a rancho. Oh, he could manage anything. Once in—how did they name it?—in Uruguay he had run away with a railroad train. And only last summer at Bellagio—Miss West had only to hold her tongue to have all her questions answered before they were asked; her mind was set at rest completely in regard to the title and estate of Tempo-Rubato; he was indeed a *marchese*, he indeed possessed the villa, and that opera bouffe characterization of him by his friend was altogether unjust; impossible that he should be an atheist, and a socialist, and a prospective polygamist!

Fin-de-Siècle was equally full in his details of the life at Thorheim. They were charming, well-disposed people; they appreciated him highly—so highly that they had almost opposed his leaving them for a single afternoon in Constance. Their appreciation was so oppressive that they had insisted upon providing a sort of footman to accompany him; they were killing him with kindness. They had a number of friends and acquaintances sojourning with them; several of these were exceptionally interesting people. One in particular, a gentleman from Stockholm, almost fascinated him. This guest had the freedom of a large apartment in a disused wing of the château, and had filled the place with models and reliefs of many well-

known mountain-peaks and -chains, all his own work, and all done to scale with remarkable neatness and precision. Yet of the real mountains he had an inexplicable dread; nothing in all the world could induce him to set his foot on one. A singular type: a cobbler going barefoot; a stroller jingling a pocketful of napoleons before a shop-window merely to pass on; a bachelor long and earnestly regarding the *beau sexe* only to remain a bachelor still. His Swedish friend, however, was in the habit of taking tramps and making excursions through this miniature Alpine world, and nothing pleased him more than to be accompanied by his visitors, whom he received and escorted with the greatest kindness and courtesy. Fin-de-Siècle himself had gotten up an appetite for breakfast that very morning by a twenty-mile walk through the Upper Engadine, and he felt that if the Governor and his party were to steam down the lake in that direction some afternoon, Herr Axenquist would consider their presence a positive honor.

The Governor pondered. He had no great desire to enter Fin-de-Siècle's new circle, but this offer brought up a point or two worth considering. The Chatelaine, of course, was equal to almost anything, but the amount of actual mountain-climbing to be expected from an old man in his sixties and a young woman fresh from the lapping luxury of Paris could not be great, and this facile substitute really came in quite opportunely. So one afternoon they took the train that skirts the bank of the narrow, river-like, hill-bordered Untersee, and in less than an hour they found themselves in the heart of the Alpine world.

They were hardly within the great gate which gave entrance to the park of Thorheim, when the Chatelaine found her attention forcibly taken possession of by a middle-aged lady who seemed to have been indulging in an aimless stroll through the grounds, and who was so glad to be able to fix her mind on some definite point that her greeting passed the utmost bound of cordiality. She was tall, angular, and faded; her hands played to and fro with a tremulous uncertainty; and the Chatelaine at once recognized her as the English spinster whose intrepid parrot had made the journey to Pontresina. When she learned that our friends had but lately passed through St. Gall, she turned on the Governor and asked eagerly after the whey-cure. Ought she to go to Gais or to Heiden? Had any of his friends ever tried Urnäsch? How did the accommodations compare? Did any of the hotels have their own goats? Was there an English church? Was it best to drink the whey hot or cold? The whey-cure was her plan through September, after which she was to pass on to Vevey or Montreux for the grape-cure—she had heard that the vines promised the greatest yield in years. Yes, she was moving around as actively as ever,—this with a sudden turn and smile in the direction of the Chatelaine,—she was quite the traveler of the family, in fact. Her people had been hoping that she would remain quietly in one place; some of them had even come from England to see that she was properly accommodated here. Of course it was all very nice and pleasant here on the lake; was it not so, mongsieu'?—this with a faded but arch little smile

in the direction of Fin-de-Siècle,—the air was good, the scenery attractive, their host more than kind, but —well, her brothers hardly knew her, she fancied; she had little faith in the water-cure and less in the air-cure; she should be moving on presently.

They were all moving on, in fact, under the guidance of this amateur of cures, who was actively leading the way up to the house, thrusting hastily culled roses into the ladies' hands, and babbling to all alike in a voluble, barbarous French. Under the porte-cochère they met the proprietor of the place, a kindly, serene old gentleman, who seemed possessed of a patience and composure that nothing appeared likely to disturb, and by him they were presented to the guide who was to pilot them through their Alpine diversions.

The latter was a tall man of thirty-five, more slender than he should have been for his height, and more stooping than seemed proper to the mountaineer. His long hair was pushed back from his forehead, and fell sidewise in two great waves, one yellow, the other snow-white; and his eyes, which may once have shone with a splendid courage, now beamed but dully with the submissive patience of some cowed brute. He seemed a man out of whom all life and color and passion had been washed by the sudden and tremendous sweep of one great wave; but the Governor, who was already beginning to feel the first twinges of that shame and mortification which were soon to pass twenty times the utmost bounds of any annoyance that could possibly be felt by the victim of his ill-considered jest, did not learn their host's sad story till some time after. For the man had spent a night on

the Schreckhorn in a blinding snowstorm. He had played his game with Nature on her own table and with her own counters, and had come away bankrupt.

He presently led the way into his own quarters —his workshop, his studio, his gymnasium, his playground, as he said. It was a large, homely room, the walls of which were covered with maps, photographs, and sketches. In one corner stood a rough workbench littered with broken bits of clay, half-emptied cans of gypsum, and a dozen fine paint-brushes soaking in a pail of turpentine, while various pieces of work in clay and plaster of Paris were ranged about on tables and shelves,—reliefs of single peaks, or of groups, or of whole mountain-chains, as the case might be,—some of them being small pieces on a large, while others were large pieces on a small, scale. To Zeitgeist, who had done some climbing in the Tyrol during the previous summer, their host handed down a compact little model of the Ortler, by means of which the young man was able to recall at once the principal points of his excursion; while La Malade (as Fin-de-Siècle briefly termed the Englishwoman), who had followed the party quite as a matter of course, and who seemed perfectly at home in the rarified atmosphere of the High Alps, suddenly launched herself on the Governor with a relief of the Sentis. The old gentleman, whose discomfort under the inquiring gaze of the Chatelaine was all the time increasing, gave his attention willingly enough to the fountainhead of the whey-cure. It was on these high pastures of the Hüttenalp and the Meglisalp—here, mongsieu', and here—that the goats were herded and

the whey prepared. And this road, running through the ravine and crossing the brook, was the route used by the goatherds in carrying the whey down to Gais and those other places. These patches of white on the top, now, were just snow-fields and glaciers; but if mongsieu' would see snow and ice—

La Malade abruptly set the Sentis down in the nearest available corner, and turned the Governor around toward a large relief that occupied the middle of the room. It was placed on a table some ten feet long, and represented that part of the vast Alp-chain lying between Monte Turlo and Mont Collon, forming the southern boundary of Switzerland. Before this monument of painstaking care and industry Herr Axenquist now stood with an air of grave courtesy, while the little pointer he held in his hand wavered over the sharp peak of the Matterhorn; and the Chatelaine, whose foot was now on her native heath, indeed, was greatly pleased, and took no trouble to conceal it. Here, *chère Aurélie*, was the road down to Châtillon; and there ran the footpath across to Macugnaga; and over on that side, beyond the Col de St. Théodule, was the way down into the Nicolaithal; while here, of a verity, at the very head of this high and narrow valley, was La Trinité itself. Ah, *vraiment*, La Trinité! And the Chatelaine threw back her head and expanded her nostrils, as if she whiffed the mountain air indeed.

La Malade eagerly jogged the Governor's elbows. There, when had he ever seen anything more truly *magnifique?* What was more beautiful than those green meadows with that dear little rivulet running through them? Then could anything be more natural

than the streaked and spotted brown that represented the rocks of this precipice, just here? And as for the fine dust that coated all the glaciers and snow-peaks, *that* had been her own suggestion. He should see the sun upon it. She rushed to the window and swept the curtain to one side. Ah, mongsieu', how it shone, how it glittered, how like the Alps indeed!

The host turned a smile of quiet appeal on the voluble enthusiasm of the Englishwoman. He hoped it would please his visitors to make some excursion or other under his care; he was a tried and trustworthy guide; he would undertake nothing too difficult for even the ladies, and he thought he could promise that none of them would be unduly fatigued. Here were the Tödi, the Bernina; there was Cortina d'Ampezzo, in the Dolomites; or if they preferred they might merely cross the Splügen with him. The Governor, with a clear conscience, would have enjoyed this little flight of fancy beyond measure; as things now were, he said in a hard, determined voice, that the occasion was exceptional, and so should the expedition be, too. He favored the best and the most: nothing would please him better than the ascent of Mont Blanc itself. Then he set his collar, and swallowed something.

At this suggestion La Malade gave a little cry of joy, and darted down under a table which had been concealed behind the open door. This, she declared, as her head bumped against the under side of the table, was her favorite expedition; she had been up fourteen times already, but it was every bit as interesting as ever. She whisked the cloth off the model, took hold of two corners of it, and Herr Axenquist laid hold

of the other two, and thus the mountain was lifted into place. The host explained with a grave smile that the ascent was properly a matter of two days. It was best to get away from Chamouni at midday, and to spend the night in the inn at the Grands Mulets. The trip, however, might well stand a little compression; they should achieve the entire expedition in that one afternoon. And as the weather was fine and settled one guide might be made to do for the whole party, while anything like a porter could very well be dispensed with altogether. Here, then, was Chamouni; there was the road to the Glacier des Bossons; here, up through the valley of the Nant Blanc, was the path to the Pierre Pointue, on the edge of the Glacier des Bossons itself; higher up, the Pierre à l'Éschelle, with a view of the Dôme du Goûter, and these various other eminences; here we cross the Glacier—and so on to the Grands Mulets. *Entrez! Herein!* Would they please be seated? such refreshment would now be set forth as the inn afforded.

Fin-de-Siècle whispered delightedly to the Governor that here was an original type indeed; the Governor winced. The Count smiled and nodded; the Governor groaned.

A maid came in bearing a tray, and the thoughtful mountaineer now regaled his guests with tea and cakes. He also offered fans, for, thanks to La Malade and her new arrangement of the curtains, the temperature, even at this altitude of ten thousand feet, was distinctly warm. This volatile person accepted a fan, but refused the tea, sending the maid back for her own approved beverage. And as she opened her bottle for

herself, with the dexterity that comes from long practice, she vented a bit of good-natured sarcasm on the people who would make her believe that all chalybeate waters were alike, and that she might just as well decide to please herself with St. Moritz without sending all the way to Tarasp. But she had not been born yesterday, and if there was one thing she knew more about than another, that thing was mineral springs. Who had attended to the placing and marking of all the springs and baths on these reliefs if not she herself?—putting them down in colors corresponding to their ingredients: the salt-springs at Aigle, white; the sulphur-springs of St. Gervais and Stachelberg, yellow; and so forth. To all of which her entertainer, now in conversation with the Governor, bowed an indulgent acknowledgment over his cup of tea.

The Governor was scanning him closely. To put this grave, composed gentleman under suspicion was unjust; to subject him to restraint was outrageous. If every one who indulged his fancy was mentally deranged, what might people be thinking of himself? If these reliefs around them carried good cause for medical surveillance, how then with regard to the antiquities at Avenches? Nonsense; this man was as clear-headed as anybody else.

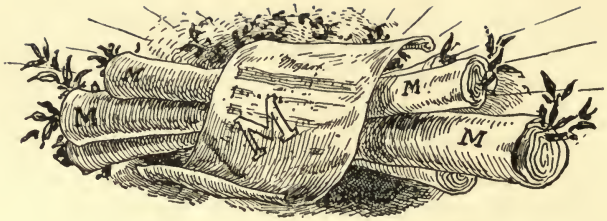
Their host rose suddenly and ordered the tea-things out. They must lose no more time, he said. The glacier should be crossed before the sun had got too high. They must press on to the summit. Their real, serious work was just about to begin. He quickly threw open the door of a little cabinet, and passed out an alpenstock to Aurelia West. He thrust an ice-ax into Zeit-

geist's hand, and pressed upon the Governor a long coil of rope, which the shamefaced old gentleman received as it had been a penitential scourge. And here were spectacles of colored glass; the glare on the snow was so terrible—terrible. Was all ready? *Allons; en avant!* With care, mademoiselle! with care! He seized the Chatelaine by the arm. Beware that crevasse—it was just here that the young English lady had gone down and dragged her guide with her. Be cautious, young sir; this ice-steep was treacherous enough, in truth; but three steps—cut so—were all that was needed. There was no cause for alarm yet; slowly and steadily, and all was well. But what was this, rushing, leaping, tumbling, crashing down, with an ever louder roar? Back, back, monsieur! He pinned the Governor against the wall, and wiped the drops of sweat from his own forehead. Ah-h! it was happily past,—*l' avalanche*,—and none of them the worse for it. Well, then, here was the Grand Plateau, here the Mur de la Côté, here the Petits Mulets; but the summit, the summit, where was *that?* Was it in sight for none of them—not one—not one? He ran his hand excitedly through his long, disordered hair. Was it growing darker and colder? Was every one of them benumbed? His eyes shone with a wild glitter, and wandered aimlessly about over the peaks and valleys beneath them. Ah, it was the fog, the cruel, treacherous fog; but hasten, hasten—here was the path, and the refuge was not far ahead. Up, up! No; you must not, shall not lie there. His voice rose to a shrill, strident tone, a tone full of the cutting sweep of the mountain-roaring wind, a tone stung by the tingle

of gust-driven ice-particles spinning on and on in remorseless eddies. He suddenly flecked his hand across his face. He gave a short, sharp cry, and clutched Zeitgeist by the arm. Had *he* felt it too? And did he not know what it meant? They were lost—lost! They should perish there on the mountain, like others before them; for it was the snow—the snow—

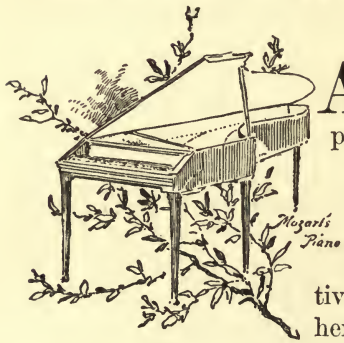
The Englishwoman gave a shrill scream. The young men stared in amazement. Aurelia West and the Chatelaine drew back in terror. The Governor set his jaw, seized the unfortunate firmly by the arm, caught the pointer out of his hand, and in ten seconds had conducted the whole party down to Chamouni with a clear head and a sure foot. He placed their host on the chair beside the model, and gave him a glass of water. The poor fellow weakly kissed his hand, and burst into tears.

On the way home Aurelia West overheard the Governor invite Fin-de-Siècle to accompany them into the Tyrol. This was the form that the Governor's penance took. She did not catch the response, but she was willing enough that it should have been a No.



V.

SALZBURG: MEPHISTO AMONG THE MANUSCRIPTS.



AURELIA WEST, on witnessing the departure of her Italian acquaintance from Flüelen by the grandest of all the routes leading down into his own native country, had supposed herself irretrievably devoted to the Teutonic side of the Alps, and reasonably beyond the reach and influence of any other land or race. Had she not just passed within a few hundred yards of the Rütli, still flourishing greenly with the memories of mountain freedom? Was she not now within a mile or two of the birthplace of the liberator

and hero of the land? Had she not beheld within the last hour the monumental rock commemorating at once the hero and his poet? Was she not now surrounded on every hand by scenery whose noble grandeur might well match and offset even such name and fame? Ay, truly. How pitiful, then, that a wall dingily stuccoed and rudely lettered with the simple word "Albergo" should so put the unthrift and melody of Italy before her as to wipe out completely the glorious Vierwaldstättersee and make all Switzerland as but a thing that was not! How deplorable that the good-natured clamor of a company of untidy, uncoated young fellows playing tenpins, with the ordinary sprinkling of "sei" and "sette" and "otto," and no more than the usual allowance of "adesso" and "allora," should have been equal to the canceling of the lines on Tell's own pedestal, and even able to obliterate the lofty inscription on the Mythenstein itself! To think that Schiller and William Tell and Altdorf and the Axen-Strasse and the Frohnalpstock and other Teutonicalities innumerable should have been bowled over and sent flying helter-skelter by the hand of an ignorant, unwashed Italian peasant! To think that one who had but to pick and choose among the multiplied magnificences of all Helvetia should even for a single moment experience an unreasoning impulse to forego Leman and Lucerne, Pilatus and the Jungfrau, the Tête Noire and the Gemmi, the Oberland and the Dolomites, in order to plunge headlong across the St. Gotthard and make one's instant way to Como and Venice and Rome! But such is Italy.

This was the acute and incongruous emotion that

sported with Aurelia West as she stood before the Tell statue at Altdorf, and a feeling not altogether dissimilar—being different in degree only, and not in kind—came over her after the first day or two of their stay in Salzburg. They were on the extreme northern edge of the Alps, and yet there were many things in the aspect of the place to suggest that they might be on the extreme southern edge. Aurelia did not fully apprehend the complication of considerations that had combined to this effect. She did not know that frequent conflagrations had well-nigh wiped out the bristling awkwardness of German medievalism, or that the magnificent but mistaken tastes of a long line of baroque bishops had favored the Italian influence in architecture no less than in music; but she had some sense of the moderation and restraint shown everywhere in the sky-lines, and various domes and church-towers and fountains and palace-fronts seemed almost unbroken reflections of Fontana and Bernini and Carlo Moderna. The handsome quays along the Salzach might almost have come from Pisa; the high-perched old fortress up on the Mönchsberg suggested Bellinzona, or even the Belvedere at Florence; the outlines of the encircling mountain amphitheater, with the Hochstaufen, the Untersberg, the Tännengebirge, and the rest, seemed sufficiently suave and fluent to harmonize with the other features of the panorama; while from every convent and abbey—Benedictine, Ursuline, Franciscan—came subtle whiffs of a somber and uncompromising and poetically mysterious Catholicism. It seemed like Italy, indeed; it almost was Italy—Italy in a blonde wig.

Nor was Aurelia long in discovering that in leaving the Lake of Uri for the valley of the Salzach they had simply exchanged one hero for another. Patriotism gave way to melody; Tell was supplanted by Mozart. The fanatical frenzy of the musical amateur appeared early and in all its virulence in both Zeitgeist and the Governor, and it became evident that as long as they remained in Salzburg—most exquisitely lovely of all the German towns though it be—nature was to take a place secondary to art. They visited in rapid and regular course the house where Mozart was born, the house in which he subsequently lived, that other house (removed hither all the way from Vienna and set up on the Capuzinerberg across the river) in which he composed certain of his works, and that other house still where manuscripts, portraits, and piano combine to make a veritable little Mozart museum. Zeitgeist caressed with a shining eye the faded physiognomy of that meager little clavier, and the young women gave forth a sympathetic sigh as they scanned the painted lineaments of its one-time owner, but the Governor's attention was almost completely concentrated on the manuscripts; a thousand musical bees were already buzzing in his bonnet, and he was coming to feel that to leave Salzburg without a leaf or two of copy from the master's own hand would be to confess their visit pitifully resultless indeed.

But he was prepared to be very reasonable in his demands; he would make a point of keeping his expectations quite within the bounds of moderation. To hope for a loose page from the Zauberflöte or the Entführung would be unwise; to look for a bit of

scoring out of one of the great symphonies would be absurd. But something—any little thing at all, however small, however simple, should be, must be found: a scrap from some one of all those numberless masses, a trifling set of exercises for the piano; though truly the thing he most desired was some little sonatine or other arranged for 'cello, piano, and the *flauto traverso* —an unlikely combination, indeed, but still among the possibilities. Included in their lodgings on the quay there was a dimmed old rococo salon of the last years of the last century, and it had struck him that an evening of chamber-music there—a kind of memorial service read, as it were, from the master's original manuscript—would not be inappropriate. He seated the Chatelaine at the passé piano, dressed her in brocade, powdered her hair, canopied her with loves and graces, and illumined her with clusters of wax-lights. Zeitgeist and himself completed the group, but they were both indeterminate as to costume and not too plainly in view; while Fin-de-Siècle and Aurelia West merely existed negatively, and quite outside the frame as audience. To provide the proper pabulum for such a feast he would use any fair means, and if fair means were found to fail, then he would use—

Aurelia West lent herself sympathetically to the Governor's idea; she had some sense of the fit, the effective, the pictorial, and she was already revolving plans of her own, according to which the Chatelaine was to be shown, properly situated, attended, circumstanced; but Fin-de-Siècle held quite aloof, apparently, from all this musical madness. He had but an imperfect sympathy for any form of art whose method of

expression was such as to make impossible the incorporation of criticism. What expression of opinion was there in a fugue? What point could possibly be maintained by a sonata? Why should the artist, pen in hand, choose to content himself with the inarticulate, when the articulate itself, with all its wonderful opportunities for comment, criticism, controversy, was within equal reach and of infinitely greater influence? How much better to argue than to rhapsodize; how much finer to judge than to create; how far superior the commentator to the mere fancifier!

It was from the heights of the Capuzinerberg, well above the monastery and none too many steps from the threshold of Mozart's own house, that Fin-de-Siècle was waving with so much energy, and hardly less sincerity, the red flag of Modernity. Across the river lay the old town penned in by the long, heaving sweep of the ragged and uneasy Mönchsberg, and above the high-heaped towers of Hohen-Salzburg the last segment of the rocky, snow-flecked amphitheater began to lapse away easily into the featurelessness of the Bavarian plain. Below them, in the square between the quay and the towered flank of the cathedral, rose the statue of the immortal composer himself, and before this presence the oriflamme flaunted by Fin-de-Siècle took on, in the Governor's eyes, a tinge more sanguinary still.

To find the mainspring of art in a criticism of life, as a certain great Anglais had expressed it, was, he declared, absurd; to base it on a fondness for the representation of life, like a certain acute Américain, was better, though inadequate; but to see art as both the

exercise and the result of a trained self-expression was better still—a self-expression prompted by the inner necessities of the individual. From this point of view the main consideration was the artist himself—he must look to it that his self-expression was adequate, correct, emollient; the artist was the exact opposite of the polemist—the one expressing himself, the other impressing himself; nor should one ignore the fact that the value of words, in an age of words, was likely to be overestimated. The second consideration involved the circle to whom the artist made his close, immediate appeal, as well as these impressionable outsiders, unknown to him personally, but presumed to exist somewhere in a state of receptive and responsive sympathy. The third consideration was the— But for the artist absolute, the artist pure and simple, there *is* no public. As regarded other art-workers, those prompted by emulation, request, mimicry, or necessity to duplicate, imitate, extend the work resulting from the exercise of this first creative impulse, there was a word for them: one man is an artist, another is "artistic"; just as one man is a gentleman while another is only a "gentlemanly person." Really, the great thing was that the subject should feel the prompting of the creative spirit in him and should realize the relief that comes from an outward and sensible expression of the inward and the insensible. Then it was largely a question of selection, proportion, arrangement, presentation; and even if the outward form were partial, broken, obscure, fragmentary— The Governor paused and glanced modestly askance. His thoughts had turned toward Aventicum, and he hoped

that some one might see the way to weaving a laurel-wreath and placing it upon his brow then and there. But no one offered to, and he made the mortified resolve that the next time he went fishing he would use a bigger bait.

Zeitgeist did not feel prompted to go out of his way to support Fin-de-Siècle, but he disliked to see the Governor put himself deliberately in the wrong by ruthlessly classing art-workers of the second rank among the amateurs. Taste and technique, he thought, were enough, without the creative intelligence to put a man among artists and to keep him there. The idea, however, that the artist was the central point within his own circle he accepted readily enough, and the other idea, too, that the artist's proper and primary appeal was to his own circumference. Had not the Salzburg master himself declared that no one should try to be a composer save him who wrote because he must? And had he not to a lavish and unprecedented degree showered his own quick-coming fancies, for the asking, or less, upon friends, family, associates, mere acquaintances? What other spirit, indeed, would have made chamber-music what it was—the great feature of the greatest musical age? Chamber-music, in fact, was this young man's besetting dissipation. His apprehension of music was principally intellectual—he delighted in the tough, the abstruse, the over-technical. He trudged on in the treadmill of a fugue with a light-footed alacrity, and could follow a subject in double counterpoint from the score with absolute avidity. A lady had once told him that the playing of his quartette was tiresome. To whom? he had asked. To

her, she had replied. And then he had quieted her by telling her that chamber-music was meant to interest not the listeners but the performers. As for the Governor, his delight was wholly in his own work. He played quite indifferently, but he took more pleasure in the uncertain pipings of his own flute than any sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies in which he had no share could ever have given him. I doubt if even the very harmony of the spheres would have seemed quite to his taste, unless resulting in part from the puckering of his own lips.

But it was idle to stand disputatiously on the panoramic height of the Capuzinerberg in expectation that some chance breeze from below might waft them up a page of manuscript; so during the course of the day the Governor repaired to a certain small shop in an obscure part of the town where, as a friend had advised him, he might be able to meet his requirements. It was in a street close to the base of the Mönchsberg, against whose steep rise the houses were attached, and in whose side they were partly excavated. The place was in charge of a substantial matron, who drew her hand across her mouth with a kind of anticipatory relish, and who jostled aside a collection of dusty and dented curios to make space for the spreading out of her musical merchandise. She had something to show, and she knew it; she opened up in a way that more than redeemed the promise of the place, and that made the Governor's wish seem not so very difficult of gratification after all. She had not only Mozart — that was merely the beginning. She had Gluck, Hadyn, Mendelssohn; Rossini,—hotch-potchy

—an omelette in notes; Liszt,—bizarre, erratic—a playing to and fro of chain lightning; a letter of Beethoven's—a sad jumble; a page of Rousseau—the slow, painstaking, momentumlessness of the half-amateur; and bits of the local master *à discretion*. One of these last Zeitgeist held in his hand, studying it long and carefully. Then he handed it over to the Governor, and asked him if it was possible to detect in such penwork any peculiarity of character or temperament that could properly—could even possibly—explain the life and death that the composer was made to live and die. What other manuscripts of all those lying around them could compare with Mozart's in care, order, regularity, lucidity?—a golden mean between the downright, bull-headed vigor of Bach and Händel on the one hand, and the over-delicate, too-refined touch of Chopin or the morbid and nebulous page of Schubert on the other;—a pattern of arrangement, of moderation, of general reasonableness that almost, indeed, grazed the commonplace. The general course of his life, too, had exhibited the same effect of moderation, self-possession, and decorum that his manuscripts displayed. His father, a sober and exemplary Christian, had given his childhood instruction (if such extraordinary and mysterious precocity in all matters musical can be said to have received or required instruction), and had accompanied his youth and early manhood (an exceptionally filial one) with advice and watchful care. Accustomed from his earliest years to the most ungrudging, most unbounded recognition of his marvelous gifts, he had earnestly struggled on in a career which he felt his own qualifications demanded

and deserved. His was a nature foreign to excesses of whatever kind; he was in the main temperate, self-controlled—he kept himself well in hand. His disposition was noticeably sunny and sanguine; his personality was peculiarly sympathetic and winning. His self-respect, while an active quality, was not so bumptiously self-assertive as to put him at an undue disadvantage in the society of the day, while his name and fame received an early and wide diffusion through France, the academies, conservatories, and theaters of Italy, and all the courts of Germany. But—

The Governor could not escape the pitiful force of this *but*. He gave a faint sigh, and absent-mindedly creased and re-creased the dingy leaflet in his hand, quite unconscious of the indignant impatience of the shop-woman. Yes, he declared, here if anywhere was reason for belief in the active interference of a malignant fate in human affairs; no career that he was at all acquainted with showed such a disheartening discrepancy between cause and effect, such a painful, inexplicable hitch between means and end. It was not enough to say that Mozart was naturally something of an innovator and was too absorbedly bent on the free vent of his own copious fancyings to keep within academic bounds. Gluck had broken through the bars more completely, and had compelled recognition in a widened field. It would not do to say that the line between the musician and the servant was not drawn very clearly in that day, and that where all the great families—the Esterhazys, the Gallitzens, the Liechtensteins—maintained complete orchestras and ordered new symphonies and serenatas just as they ordered

new coats or new table-cloths, the very number of musicians employed would work against the full recognition of the individual. Haydn, under these conditions, had made himself a permanent and respected place. It was not well to lay too great stress on the clouds of infinitesimal and multitudinous cabalists that swarmed and stung on every stage to the desperation of the composer and his sympathizers. All the other composers of the day labored under the same disadvantage as well. It would not be greatly to the purpose to say that the astounding precocity of Mozart's childhood had prejudiced his subsequent career; for the boy who at four composed pieces for the clavier, at six astonished the monks of Wasserburg by his performance on the organ, at seven rebuked the slow appreciation of the Pompadour, and at fifteen conducted his own opera at Milan to the wonder and admiration of all Italy, never received an iota of appreciation from his chief patron and most evil of all evil stars, the archbishop of Salzburg, who fed him at table with valets and cooks and who rewarded the complete dedication of his time and talent by an honorarium of two ducats a year. Indeed, the more one pondered the case the more one was tempted to escape from its meshes by recourse to reasons too puerile, too simple to be accepted by many as reasons at all. Was it not probable that Mozart, with his enjoyment of familiar human intercourse, showed too great a facility in sliding down to meet non-genius on its own plain, common, every-day level—no pretension, no attention, no claims, no consideration? And was it not more than likely that most of Mozart's misfortunes came from his pecu-

liarly insignificant physique, in a day when "presence" counted for so much? What chance had this poor little fellow of holding his own against the robust, overtopping Prince-Bishop, the lordly Hieronymus von Colloredo, with his horses and hounds, his trains of swarming servants and retainers, and the bevies of magnificent women with whom he loved to surround himself? The same chance that a butterfly has amid the belchings of some soot-blackened chimney; the same chance that a bubbling spring has against the associated spades of a crowd of clod-heaving navvies. But that such a soul should have passed away singing, as we may say, and surrounded, in all literalness, by its mates, and that the body it left behind should have been carelessly hurried to the common trench—

The exasperated shopkeeper snatched her maltreated manuscript from the Governor's unconscious hand and laid it on top of the others which had already been placed back in their box. The Governor put his sympathies into one pocket and got his purse out of another, and came away with such purchases as Zeitgeist's taste and acumen, added to his own, could contrive.

But all the Mozart manuscripts were not in the hands of the laity, as it presently came to be discovered. Salzburg is nothing if not ecclesiastical, and there is quite a round of churches and convents for those disposed to make the most of the place. Some of these places are inaccessible to ladies, and some of them are quite out of the question for gentlemen; but at such as were practicable for both the Chatelaine's friends were able to note how easy it was for her to

slide from the secular into the devotional. The unconscious simplicity of these transitions was viewed by Aurelia West with a kind of awed embarrassment; her own devotions were of course performed only at stated intervals and under circumstances conventionally correct; she herself was more or less unable to feel the efficacy of week-day prayer, and really preferred to worship in the company of other ladies gowned and bonneted for that purpose. It surprised her a good deal to see with what an indulgent interest these extemporaneous devotions, briefly undertaken in dusky corners, were regarded by the young men, for she knew that the Chatelaine's uplifted eye found no counterpart in either of them. Fin-de-Siècle, far from looking up to religion, looked down upon it, while Zeitgeist looked aslant at it with a level gaze that claimed to see the good and the bad in every system and to weigh them all quite coolly and indifferently against each other. But they both appreciated the devotional as an element in the female character, the one feeling that to the Ewig-weibliche we must look more and more for faith and imagination, and the other holding that a serious, large-eyed young woman with a strong affinity for the *prie-dieu* made the most charming of frontispieces. What a pity that in the best-made books of fiction a frontispiece was no longer *chic!* And neither of them, I fancy, would have resented a churchly wife.

In one of these churches, one morning, the Governor having inexplicably vanished, the young men were taking advantage of so appropriate a time and place to air their theological views. Zeitgeist had already

upset the sacred chronology, to the scandal of Aurelia West, and Fin-de-Siècle was engaged in cracking a series of ornamental flourishes against the supernatural about the startled ears of the Chatelaine, when the Governor, emerging from nowhere in particular, as it seemed, came tripping toward them (to the great relief of the orthodox sex) with a twinkle in his eyes and a dusty document in his extended hand. He announced with great glee that he had just got hold of another Mozart manuscript, and he justified himself before the reproachful Chatelaine, who appeared to be suspecting some grave impropriety or worse, by a statement of the facts. He had burst unexpectedly at once into the sacristy and into a rehearsal. He had found a lank old man in a soutane seated before a music-rest in the midst of a dozen little chaps dressed in red petticoats and white over-things, and every one of those blessed choristers was singing at the top of his lungs—had any of them heard it?—his own proper part in a Mozart mass from a real Mozart manuscript. They were being kept to the mark by a pair of lay brothers who played—incredible and irreverent combination!—a tuba and a bassoon; and the master had quieted his obstreperous aids, and had come straight to him in the most civil manner, and—Well, here was the manuscript—twenty florins well spent. It was not a mass, oh, dear, no—let nobody think it; it was a little trio—la-a-a, la la la la-a-a; that was the way it went. These parts here were for two violins, probably, but they would go well enough on the flute and the upper strings of the 'cello. Really, it was not so difficult, after all, this finding

of M-double-S, and he felt that he could soon leave Salzburg quite content.

The Governor's content was raised a degree higher still a little later in the day, as he was strolling among the clipped hedges and marble statues of the old archiepiscopal pleasance behind the Schloss Mirabell—a garden cut after the old French mode, and as little expressive of sanctity as is the fatigued gaiety and worldly charm of a wearied beauty just home from a ball. The Governor was all the time conscious that he was not the only pair of lungs breathing in the world-weary atmosphere of this sophisticated retreat, and he presently perceived, modestly hovering about behind a hedge of arbor-vitæ, a youth with a battered brown portfolio under his arm. The Governor was presently examining the contents of this portfolio (with an interest that did not quite rise to enthusiasm, however), and had soon committed himself to an appointment for the inspection of more Mozart manuscripts. On his return to his lodgings he found a most flattering note awaiting him from one of the dignitaries of the cathedral. A number of original manuscripts by the great Mozart had just come to light in the church library, and the Governor, as an eminent amateur, was invited to attend a private rehearsal from the same.

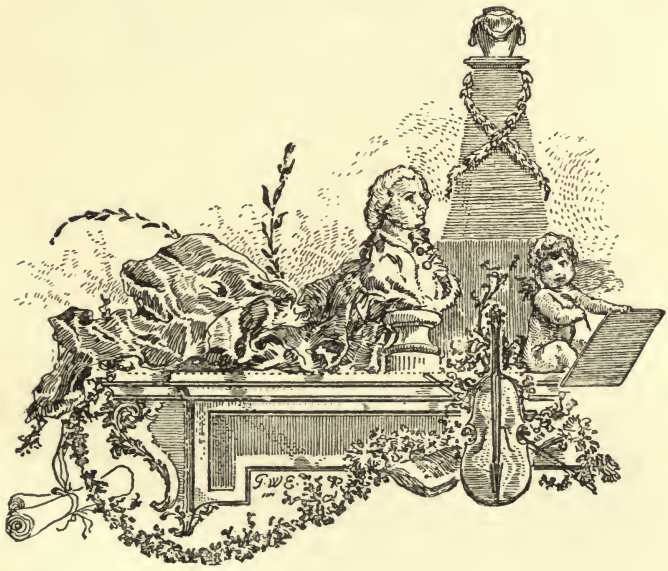
The next day the Chatelaine made a visit to the Ursuline convent on the Nonnberg. The lady superior was more than gracious, and from her own private cabinet she abstracted a bit of music which she charged the Chatelaine to convey to her distinguished relative, —a little song in the own authenticated hand of their

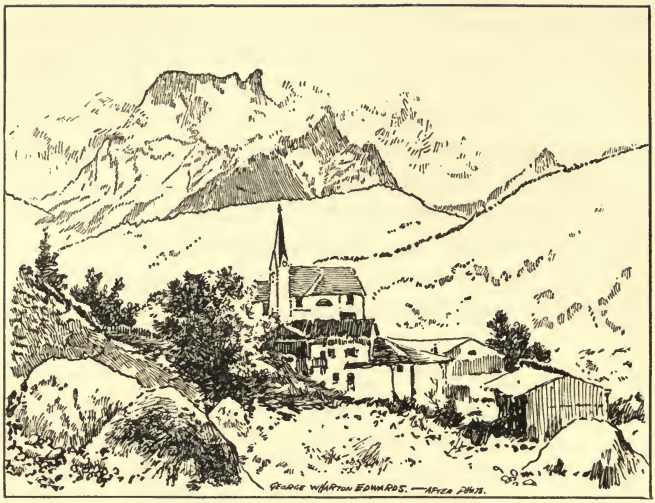
beloved Wolfgang Amadeo. When Bertha placed this offering in her godfather's hands the old gentleman gave a quiet sigh; for a lad was then waiting below for an answer to a note that he had brought from the shop in the Gstättengasse, other Mozart manuscripts having developed in that dusky quarter; while before him on the table lay the prospectus of a publisher who was shortly to bring out a series of Mozart quartettes, just discovered.

When the Governor sallied forth next morning, a seedy-looking individual who had been waiting half an hour on the pavement opposite thrust his hand into the inside pocket of a shabby coat as he came stepping rapidly across the street. But the Governor turned his head the other way and hurried on without stopping.

On their last day they climbed up once more to Hohen-Salzburg to pay to the Canterbury of Germany the parting tribute of a final general view. They indulged in a modest little luncheon at the restaurant which offers refreshment at the entrance to the castle. Here, while Zeitgeist was settling the score and the rest were endeavoring to fasten a lasting impression of so much beauty on their minds, a waiter slid up confidentially alongside the Governor with his fingers fumbling in his waistcoat pocket—Fin-de-Siècle looking on with a smile in which suspicion might have detected a trace of the sardonic. Would his lordship be pleased to look at a bit of music, genuine beyond all doubt, and written by no less a master than—The Governor turned a look of pleading expostulation upon him, collected his young people, and hurried down the hillside in all haste. On their way to

the station a boy who stood on a crossing waiting for their cab to pass jerked a paper from a bundle that he carried under his arm, and thrust it out toward the Governor. The old gentleman shuddered, and commanded the cab-driver, through the other window, to prod up his lagging beast. And as the train pulled out he sighed a sigh of relief at the thought that while the land to which they were bound was indeed a land of song, yet the music of the Tyrol was of a kind not generally committed to paper.





VI.

THE DOLOMITES: SCIENCE IN PANIC.

IT is not to be supposed that the Governor passively accepted the occurrences at Salzburg as a mere series of coincidences totally disassociated from any propelling cause; but it was not until Zeitgeist made some allusions to certain social movements on the part of Fin-de-Siècle and himself during their stay in that town that the old gentleman began to suspect the

Count (finally assured of the real nature of the retreat near Constance) of having adopted retaliatory measures. At Salzburg Zeitgeist was within a hundred miles of home, and many of the personages in residence there were well known to him; so, on his making a casual allusion to Fin-de-Siècle's sudden quickening of the social spirit, and to the satisfaction which both of them had derived from a little round of visits, the Governor was able to formulate his theory. There was nothing in Fin-de-Siècle's course that he could really resent, for one may be gorged to-day yet recover his appetite to-morrow; but he sighed to think that the young man's desire for a revenge more immediate than adequate should have so irreverently involved the great master. However, this revenge had not been without its tinge of ingenuity, for it was a Gaul who had smitten a Teuton; but it pained the Governor to feel that just as Wagner was unble to aescape the wrath of associated Frenchmen at home, so Mozart should have been unable to escape the malice of a single Frenchman abroad. But then there were satisfactions: the well-known facility of the composer and his long residence in Salzburg made it likely enough that all those purchases were genuine, and it was pleasant to see that the appreciation of a once neglected genius was now so great and growing.

However, no further complications ensued, for Fin-de-Siècle presently dropped away from the little party, as he had done before, and so came to no greater familiarity with the Dolomites than he had enjoyed through Axenquist and his models. It was this collection that had first drawn their attention toward

those peculiar manifestations in South Tyrol, and when Zeitgeist declared that he had already been over a part of the ground, it was agreed that he should conduct the rest of them over the ground too. There was something in the fantastic and extravagant exaggerations of that region which started up all the latent Americanism in Aurelia West, and she who had viewed the flowingly poetic outlines of the Alban Mountains from the steps of the Lateran with no particular appreciation had risen to an enthusiastic interest over the jagged pinnacles and splintered spires by which the brain-turned Swede had portrayed the wild and fantastic outlines of the Rosengarten and the Ampezzo-Thal. The Chatelaine, too, was willing enough to forego for a while the Doric severity of the Valais to wonder over the rigid and riven Gothicity in which rose Pelmo and Tofana and Sorapis and Antelao and Civita and Cristallo and Marmolata and Hohe Schlern and Croda Malcora—a landscape in words alone. They already saw those lofty and rugged valleys, hedged in by cloven precipices and rimmed with a raggedness of escarped battlements, and they imaged to themselves a serried succession of pale and isolated peaks starting out dim and haggard through the dawn, or glaring crudely in the dazzling sunlight, or glowing threateningly in the red flush of sunset, or rising bare and desolate and spectral in the ghastly pallors of the moonlight; while the Governor nervously handled his little hammer and Zeitgeist was supposed to busy himself about the roads and the inns.

Their week in the Dolomites was to be not a promenade but a scramble—a thing assumed by the moun-

taineering Zeitgeist and understood well enough by the Governor and the Chatelaine, but a thing not dreamt of by the luxurious Aurelia, who smoothly inferred a succession of carriage drives in properly equipped equipages, and a regular series of four-franc dinners at table d'hôte—certainly nothing less than three. So, by the time they had reached Cortina and had sat down to dinner (as persons of distinction) on the landing, Aurelia began to experience a silent but deep-set sense of injury. Rocchetta, indeed, rose invitingly across the valley, Tofana had graciously cast away its portentous cloud-drapery, Malcora opened wide its glacial and mysterious amphitheater; but all that went for nothing. For they had driven into town in a rasping, rattling, mud-bespattered something drawn by a pony and a mule, and their meager dinner of broth and lettuce-heads and omelettes was placed before them on a rough table which no friendly willingness, no anxiety to please, could smoothly cover or adequately fill. She looked protestingly toward the complacently unconscious Zeitgeist, at once the general of the expedition and its commissary, as if to ask why she should ever have been brought to this rude and benighted place. Poor child! she utterly failed to realize that she was dining in state in the capital of the district, on the line of the only highway by which the region was traversed, and she was mercifully spared the knowledge that what she had already undergone was but a mere promenade indeed compared with what she was still to undergo.

She rebelliously stirred her spoon around in her broth, and recurred with an intensified resentment to

a little lecture which Zeitgeist had once read her for her scant appreciation of the fare and the service of certain villages in the Haslithal and around Kandersteg. He had asked her to observe how anywhere in Switzerland, in town or hamlet, in places famous or obscure, one was certain of a good meal, well cooked and civilly served. She had tried to extinguish him by an account of a huge caravansary in the remote regions of buttes and sage-brush where, five hundred miles from anywhere, she had found the electric light, a full orchestra, the telephone, and all the delicacies of every season. But he had not been greatly impressed; he had rejoined that it was the general average that counted, and that a civilization which grew up out of the ground was one thing, while a civilization fetched from afar on a mortar-board and slapped on with a trowel was another. Nowhere in her country, except in a few leading establishments in the great centers, had he found acceptable fare and attention, and nowhere was civility a certainty; an uncouth, insolent "independence" upset all calculations and really nullified many an outlay—even those who would behave not always could. Whereas on the Continent every little place, however remote, however humble, could offer palatable fare, cleanliness, and courtesy. All this she remembered, and remembering rebelled, though still she did not openly complain. And on the morrow they left for another place—a worse one.

For just after breakfast tidings of the most distasteful nature came to greet the Governor, from Auronzo, too, their objective point. It had been their plan to pass around the great pyramid of Antelao on

to Cadore and the Titian country generally, but the new intelligence decided him to at once push over the mountains to Caprile instead, in quite the opposite direction. The word was brought by a strapping young peasant who had been tramping and scrambling across the mountains since daylight, and who had been impelled to this exertion by a visitor now at his native place—a *forestiere* in general, a Frenchman in particular; an elderly individual of a very exacting and peremptory disposition; a stout walker and a mighty wielder of the geological hammer; a man of scowls and pursed lips and severely sudden turns of the head; in other words, the worthy Saitoutetplus, of Neuchâtel, whose message was that he was now in the Dolomites, that he had been trying to catch up with the Governor for the last three days, and that he might be looked for in Cortina within the next twenty-four hours.

This news at once put the Governor in a tremor. The sensitive old gentleman had not met his colleague since that mortifying fiasco at Aventicum, nor did he feel himself able to face him even now. He took the presence of Saitoutetplus among the Dolomites as more than an unkindness—as something almost equaling a cruelty. He had indeed known Saitoutetplus to describe himself as a grand-nephew of the great Dolomieu, and had more than once heard him refer to a trip through South Tyrol as among the possibilities; but his presence here now could only be accounted for on the ground of an ungenerous desire to gloat over a friend whose ardent and imaginative nature had put him at a disadvantage. So within an hour the Gov-

ernor and his friends had left Cortina, the cleanly, the cheerful, the Germanic, for a long course of travel among the huddled and disheveled hamlets of Venetia,—the Chatelaine seated firmly on a brown horse, Aurelia perched precariously on a sorry sorrel, the Governor straddled on an opinionative mule, and Zeitgeist trudging along on foot with the bearers of the baggage.

It was a rigorous and diversified route, and led them across lofty alps and under melancholy groves of pine through whose openings they glimpsed the pale distortions of distant Dolomites, and at one stage their guide condemned them to an hour's scramble up the rocky bed of a dry-run torrent. It was an ordeal for all of them, and the Governor, as the only one who knew why it was all undergone, was the only one who was sustained by the feeling that what he was suffering by moving was much less than what he should have suffered by remaining at rest. Pelmo and Marmolata looked down with a stony indifference on all this anguish; and when they stopped at a châlet for the refreshment of milk only to find the place barred and bolted, and to spy the inhabitants thereof swishing their scythes on the mountain-slopes a thousand feet above their heads, the martyred Aurelia seated herself on an up-turned butter-tub and openly lamented the lost luxuries of Cortina, whose cleanly rooms now stretched out like the great state apartments of some palace, whose broths and omelettes were a banquet truly fit for monarchs, and whose brisk little felt-hatted kellnerin was a ministering angel indeed. And it was sunset when the vast wall of Monte Civita flashed a

rosy signal to them from its pompous, organ-like front, and the compact and dingy habitations of Caprile appeared in the valley below.

The Governor and Bertha spent the next day in botanizing up the valley of the Livinalungo, while Zeitgeist made a solitary feint in the direction of the Marmolata glacier. Aurelia kept her room during the entire day, not because it was a close, low-ceiled little place with a complete command of the noise, odor, and disorder of the stable-yard, but in spite of that; and she revived her flagging energies on a diet of broth evolved from a pair of skinny and sapless fowls, not because she liked it, but because it was that or nothing. And about half-past four there came a rap on the door, and a new misfortune developed when a letter, addressed to the Governor and brought across the mountains by one of the Cortina hostlers, was handed in to Aurelia as the sole representative of their party now on the ground.

The handwriting of the address indicated great decision and indomitable resolution, and the last word ended with a big splutter that seemed the mingled symbol of haste, indignation, and a grim sense of ultimate triumph. When this missive was put into the Governor's hands fear passed on to panic, and his flight was turned into a rout. The persevering Saitoutetplus was sorry, he wrote, that his first message had arrived at a time when their preparations for departure had advanced so far as to make any further delay impracticable; he was anxious to meet his friend for a scientific conference of considerable importance, and he should therefore come on at once to Caprile,

arriving there next day at noon. The Governor instantly informed Zeitgeist and the Chatelaine that important and unexpected intelligence made it necessary for him to reach Botzen on the Brenner as soon as possible — conveying the impression that his letter had come from that quarter — and that they must prepare to leave Caprile for Primiero before ten o'clock the next morning.

The Governor scouted with an injured indignation the idea that Saitoutetplus' persecution had nothing behind it but a desire to discuss the geological origins of the Dolomitic region. Never would he meet the man if he could possibly avoid it, and if he were compelled to meet him in the end, still nothing, nothing in the world could compel him to agree with him. If Saitoutetplus seemed disposed to uphold the coral-reef theory of the formation of the Dolomites, he himself should hold out for the theory of volcanic action, obsolete though it might be. If Saitoutetplus preferred the volcanic theory, he, then, should make up some new theory or other right out of his own head — a thunder-and-lightning theory for instance — a theory for crags splintering and crashing under the constant and concentrated fury of a thousand thousand of forked and jagged thunderbolts — a theory, in fact, drawn from the heavens above and equally good with one drawn from the earth beneath or from the waters under the earth. But as for anything like an agreement between them — impossible!

The way to Primiero was a long and tangled succession of paths and lanes — foot-paths, mule-tracks, wagon-roads — which led southward with faint hints

of Italy in the dim blueness of distant valleys; but for the panic-driven Governor (whose every step was now taken for really no better reason than that it had had a predecessor and so must have a successor) the dominant feature of the landscape was his redoubtable colleague of the Collège, who started up here, there, and everywhere. As they boated across the lovely lake of Alleghe the Governor almost looked to see an extended arm raising above the surface of the water not the sword of the legend but the *vade mecum* of the geologist; the shadows cast by the lazily floating cumuli upon the broad, screen-like front of Civita appeared in his eyes as the image of a stubborn and contentious professor on the rostrum; while from every door and window in the piazza at Agordo a determined index-finger seemed threatening to thrust itself, with the intention of arresting the fleeting philosopher and of having the whole matter argued out then and there.

On from Agordo the road lay through the quicksilver country, and Aurelia West, as she progressed slowly over that bare, scorched, and stifling tract, and experienced the novel sensation of the perspiration drip, drip, dripping from the tip of her nose, reverted longingly to the haymakers' châlet up above Caprile. How cool the wind had been there, how fresh the flowers, how pleasant the shade to the north of that rude and bedraggled wall, how refreshing the milk in its great coarse vessels (for they had found an attendant peasant at last), how glorious the lofty, widespread view, how particularly comfortable the seat made by that upturned tub! The Chatelaine, however, went on steadily and sturdily enough, and Zeitgeist, who

was coming to regard Aurelia with considerable impatience and resentment, had nothing but admiration for her companion. Thorough-going and inexorable mountaineer, he was conceiving a great admiration for a young woman whose powers were so staying and who was so fully equal to looking after herself. *She* could disentangle her own stirrups, she could mount her own horse, and she had a knack of helpfully slinging the tea-bottles across her saddle; no hard scrabble could wrench her ankles, no steep climb could altogether take her wind; if she fancied a flower she scrambled for it, instead of weakly yet imperatively demanding that it be brought to her; and a complexion whose soft bloom came from within rather than from without took no querulous and incessant heed of wind and weather.

Miss West, on the other hand, had given him no rest. Her unceasing demands, exactions, expectations all through Switzerland had buzzed about his head like a swarm of gnats, and her indulgence in the superfine only as far back as Caprile had impelled him to tell her that that sort of thing would never do. She had reduced the willing and painstaking landlady there to a state of tears by her complaints and criticisms, and Zeitgeist had been obliged to tell her that the chief Dolomite innkeepers were not to be treated in any such fashion. They were persons of some means, position, and consequence; they were the possessors of immensely long genealogies, many of them having ranked as nobles even as late as the last century; they were independent of travelers' coin, keeping open house less for profit than for public conven-

ience; they maintained the tradition of an old-time hospitality, and were to be treated with more consideration—or at least more forbearance—than she was showing. Aurelia gulped down this information with a stony fortitude; to suffer was bad enough, but to suffer in silence—

More suffering awaited her at Primiero, where Zeitgeist, whose rôle was not to fetch and carry, to defer, and to dance attendance, unburdened himself of the vexation and indignation of a month by uttering some very pointed phrases on the tyranny of the American aristocracy. Aurelia was in a state of exhaustion approaching collapse—a situation where invective might well have given the *pas* to generosity; but she plucked up enough spirit to declare that there was no aristocracy in America: the aristocracy of slavery was dead and gone; the aristocracy of intellect had never existed there, nor anywhere else, for that matter; and as for the aristocracy of wealth, that, she had once heard her father say to her stupid brother, was a simple matter of the here-to-day-and-gone-to-morrow kind, and might well be trusted to dispose of itself. Zeitgeist regarded her with a sinister satisfaction. True, the aristocracy of slavery was dead as Pharaoh, and the aristocracy of brains was but a poetic mirage, and the aristocracy of wealth had no stability, since the talent and energy of the American usually worked itself out in a single generation; but why should anybody be deceived into imagining that a vast, settled, complicated society—a society largely urban and daily becoming more so—could not but develop privilege, draw lines, and bring on the eleva-

tion of the *aristos* in one shape or another? The ultimate reaching of such a state was, under ordinary human conditions, unavoidable, and America, as far as his observation went, was now suffering under the rule of an aristocracy novel, indeed, but incredibly widespread, close-knit, firm-rooted, all-pervasive, and ultra-tyrannical—the aristocracy of sex.

He stopped in the polishing of his spectacles and gave Aurelia a sharp and sudden look, as if to ask her what she thought of *that.* She laid hold of both arms of her chair and braced herself for the next instalment.

What was American society, Mademoiselle, but a magnificent galley in which husbands and fathers toiled at the oars, while wives and daughters sat above in perfumed idleness? He had met a gentleman in New York, the possessor of twenty millions of florins, who had told him that he was working for his board and clothes—he seemed to be employing a recognized phrase. This unfortunate toiled more incessantly than his meanest clerk, and had absolutely not a single pleasure; but his wife and daughters, along with a hundred others like them, resided in a great hotel, without duties, insensible of any obligations, and unoccupied except by their own diversions. Were not the corridors of society full of young men dancing and dangling after silly little girls with flowers and favors and theater tickets, asking nothing in return but a word or a smile, and sometimes even thankful for a snub? Aurelia nodded silently. Did not woman lead man into the dining-rooms of American hotels? Did not man wait for woman's permission before bowing to her on the public street? Was not all culture, all

study, all leisure, all the mechanism that worked on toward the amenities and refinements so completely in the hands of woman that few girls of position and opportunities were able to select a satisfactory husband from their own circle? Aurelia nodded again. And yet it was in such a land as that—the veritable paradise of woman—that the abhorrent reptile of female suffrage had reared its hideous head and had dared to hiss out its demand for "equal rights." Was it not a shame, Mademoiselle? Was—it—not—a—*shame?*

But the exhausted Aurelia was far beyond the reach of argument, even when emphasized by a smart smack on the top of a table. She was asleep.

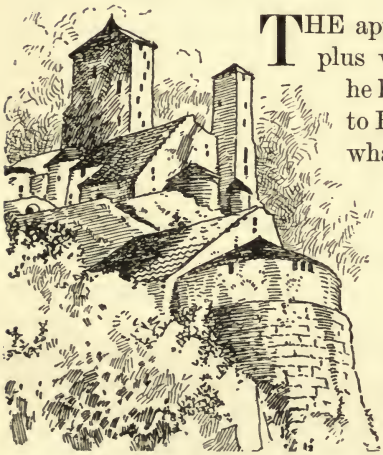
They remained at Primiero three or four days; Aurelia was glad enough to understand from the Governor that his correspondent at Botzen would no longer exact such an undue haste from them. Primiero offers a ruined castle perched on a precipitous crag, besides two or three little churches and various reminiscent scraps of history more or less Venetian, and with these Aurelia and the Chatelaine occupied themselves until the time came to move on to Predazzo—with the history, more especially, since two nights of wild weather had practically laid an embargo on locomotion. Nor had all traces of that wildness vanished by the time set for their departure from Primiero. Mud filled the roadways, mist filled the air, all the woods were full of ominous rushing sounds, and every gully echoed with the grinding and thumping of onward-hurrying stones. The way led across many a foaming torrent and through many a clammy cloud. Now and then they passed a hay wagon wrecked and abandoned, and

more than once the smaller of their donkeys, his legs lost to sight, appeared like some new aquatic creature floating on a stream of mud. And just at the point where the Chatelaine, gathered up in her bedraggled skirts and steadied by the water-soaked Zeitgeist, was running nimbly along a low wall of loosely piled stones, her weaker sister, cowed by the puddle, broke down, added her tears to those of the weeping sky, and sobbed for recollection of the road past the quicksilver mine, when the way had been so dry, the sun so warm, the air so clear! Nor could she be consoled in any way until, upon their arrival at Predazzo, they found the diligence for Botzen standing before the inn-door. It had just come in, but it would be going back to-morrow; so here was connection with the world at large and deliverance from the wilderness.

The next afternoon, as they drew up before the diligence bureau at Botzen, a short, stout figure clad in black broadcloth stood widely and firmly planted in the doorway, a fat, round, smooth face flashed a look of grim triumph upon the dismounting Governor, and Saitoutetplus stood confessed. The Chatelaine greeted him with all the cordiality of an old friend; Aurelia declared that had she but understood with whom the appointment had been made, she would have tried harder to bear up through their hasty, headlong flight; and the Governor, with a complicated smile, which was crowded with too many elements to allow much room for the element of sincerity, expressed himself overjoyed that after all these accidents and perils and endeavors and delays a relenting fortune had permitted him to meet his dear colleague at last.

VII.

MERAN: FANCY LIGHTS ITS FIRES.



THE apparition of Saitoutet-plus was vivid but brief; he had apparently posted to Botzen simply to show what he could do when he tried, and what he would do before suffering himself to be thwarted, and he almost immediately posted back again. He declined to be included in the invitation which met them at Botzen from the Frau Baronin, the mother of Zeitgeist, to pass a week in their ancestral halls in the Vintchgau up above Meran; he simply emptied upon the passive Governor several pocketfuls of rocks and

documents and returned straight to Predazzo, to the great relief of his embarrassed *confrère.*

To pass from the Dolomites to the valley of the upper Adige was a change indeed, and the Frau Baronin received her guests on a high set terrace which jutted out boldly from the rugged front of the Schloss, and which overlooked a wide and graceful expanse of orchard, vineyard, and forest,—a tract luxuriant with the grape, the fig, and chestnut and walnut trees, sprinkled with numberless castles, villas, churches, and villages, and inclosed by graceful mountains of porphyry, different indeed from the gigantic and extravagant limestone formations whose jagged and soaring bareness had for the past fortnight threatened Miss West's days and terrorized her nights.

The gratified Aurelia had still further cause for gratification: she was once more united to her baggage. Her trunks—bigger and more numerous than I should dare to state—had been sent on, by some method or other which gave her no concern, from Salzburg, and she had already come to feel that if ever in her life she was to have a chance to dress, these halls of pride should be the witness of her magnificence. She already began to sniff triumph in the air, and she found it easier now to forgive Zeitgeist for having peremptorily told her that it was impossible and unnecessary to drag those portentous chests through the Val d'Ampezzo and across the complication of chains and passes which make up the country of South Tyrol; while the series of protests and bickerings which had accompanied those huge constructions across Switzerland came to be only a hazy recollection. Aurelia had

been sheathed in woolen walking-skirts and heavy shoes for more than two months, and she was beginning to feel an irresistible desire to burst into bloom, —a process for which time, place, and circumstance now all combined. She conceded that she was beautiful, she acknowledged that her dresses were handsome, and she was only too certain that the daughters and nieces of the Baroness were doomed to absolute eclipse. One of her gowns in particular—but we shall reach that presently.

The entire Schloss and its belongings seemed but a parterre contrived for her efflorescence. History and romance, legend and adventure, trophies and tapestries, armory and picture-gallery, chapels and chambers, turrets and stairways, horses and hounds, stewards, tutors, chaplains, lackeys, and foresters, worshipful tenants and reverencing peasantry—what a background before which to trail the latest confections of Paris! All this for her, Miss Aurelia R. West, of Rochester; and yet there were those who postponed paradise beyond this present life!

Yes, it was paradise, and nothing was wanting but the serpent, and the serpent came along promptly enough.

Aurelia, who was always rendered restless and uneasy by the vicinity of vendible merchandise, and who had already communicated a touch of the subtle poison of shopping to the Chatelaine, had felt herself impelled on the very first morning after their arrival to go down to Meran to make a few purchases. Not for two weeks had her petticoats grazed a counter, and her gnawing desire to chaffer and bargain was as in-

sufferable as the torture of the opium-eater whose favorite drug is withheld. The Chatelaine was also beginning to feel the need of meeting requirements heretofore hardly dreamt of, and so the Baroness sent them down on wheels together.

As they were strolling along the arcades of Unter den Lauben a scrap of paper caught on the bottom of Aurelia's dress. It was a corner torn from the "Fremdenblatt," whose publication had just been resumed with the beginning of the early autumn season, and as she stooped to see if picking would do for her what shaking would not do a name all too familiar flashed from the type to her eyes. She crumpled the bit of paper up in her hand, and at the first convenient opportunity she was reading an account of a concert which Mdlle. Eugénie Pasdenom had given at the Kurhaus on the previous evening. And if she had turned the paper over she would have learned not only that Mdlle. Pasdenom was stopping at the Habsburgerhof, but that Tempo-Rubato and Fin-de-Siècle were at the Erzherzog Johann.

It may be imagined that if the Duchess (with a voice so limited by nature and a constituency so limited by place and season) was attempting concerts in the Tyrol, her original plan had undergone considerable modifications. In fact, the tour projected in the first place had turned out none too satisfactorily, and she had brought it to an abrupt termination several weeks before. After all, she was abroad largely for recreation; she had plenty of other things to occupy herself with, and three or four of the secondary lights of her troupe were quite enough for the carrying out

of her latest idea. Doubtless this new departure had been an embarrassment for her manager, yet there were other managers that she had not merely embarrassed but ruined. And possibly it was a bit trying to the humble members of the chorus and orchestra, too, but then the Duchess never descended to details. Upon her breaking with her impressario, Tempo-Rubato, whose self-confidence was equal to any undertaking, had thrown himself into the breach. He was willing to engineer any new enterprise that she might care to embark in. He would be her impressario or her financial sponsor; he would do the baritone parts, or the leading tenor ones if they could be brought down a third; he would take tickets or he would shift the scenery. On the spur of the moment he proposed a little tour on the other side of the Alps—Verona, Brescia, Bergamo, and so on, ending with Milan, where the people would no doubt be overjoyed to have a revival of *Orphée aux Enfers* on the stage of the Scala. And when she seemed likely to resent this obvious sarcasm he intrepidly suggested another tour—one beginning at Trieste and running along the coast of Dalmatia; he himself would charter a steamer. There was Capo d'Istria, where ten thousand people had probably been waiting all their lives to form an acquaintance with Offenbach and Le Cocq; there was Pola, the principal station of the Austrian fleet, whose officers would rally as a man; there was Fiume, and she could then say that she had been in Hungary; there was Zara, where she might count upon the influence of a good friend of his,—a personage once high in the political world and a devoted supporter of the

opera, but now residing in retirement and cultivating roses as Diocletian at Spalato had cultivated cabbages; there was Spalato itself, and Ragusa, and Cattaro, where they might give the Turks a chance to form an opinion of Fatinitza, and where she might buy a prayer-rug if she fancied. . . .

The Duchess ignored the amphitheaters and cathedrals and Venetian campanili of the Dalmatic coast, but she shed angry tears at the prayer-rug—two of them, one from each eye. He was not to speak to her in that way; she would not listen to anything of the kind. He retorted that she should listen—to anything of that kind or of any other kind. Then there had been neither listening nor speaking for three days, and then they had come together through the Vorarlberg into the Tyrol. And then, two days after the arrival of the Governor's party at Meran, they crossed over the Brenner to Italy.

But before she departed Aurelia West had a glimpse of her. One afternoon the Frau Baronin ordered out her coach, in whose crested panelings and so on Aurelia took great pride, and bowled her young visitors down to Meran again. As they rolled along the Wassermauer they observed a couple strolling intimately enough under the poplar trees close to the stream. The costume and carriage of the lady would have distinguished her anywhere, and the gentleman, who walked along with his head inclining over toward his companion and who trolled a small pug-dog in their wake, was easy enough to recognize. Aurelia looked straight ahead with a non-committal stare, and the Chatelaine, about whose ears the leaves of the

tree of knowledge had lately been rustling, looked sternly in the opposite direction; but the Baroness deliberately put up her glasses and gave the pair a leisurely and minute survey. Seldom before had she seen her abstruse and self-absorbed son exhibit such an effect of unconsciously ecstatic complacency, and she was interested in noting the person who could bring so striking a change about. Aurelia's feeling, however, was far from being one of curiosity. She was impatient with Zeitgeist and indignant at him — she was beginning to feel that she had more cause to complain of him than he of her; and as the couple passed along the promenade in a state of smiling preoccupation, Aurelia's wits fell back to working still more vigorously and insistently upon a problem which had lately come to occupy her, and was daily taking more and more of her attention.

Here was Bertha, the Chatelaine of La Trinité, a beautiful young creature, well-born, well-bred, fair, fresh, wholesome, with position, family, estate — yet who was there that appreciated her? Not Fin-de-Siècle, whose interest was hardly above the level of an impertinent curiosity. Not Tempo-Rubato, whose treatment of her had scarcely been more than an indulgent condescension. Not Zeitgeist, surely, who, with the best opportunities of all, was finding more of interest at this very moment in the strange woman from Paris. What *was* this creature's charm? She was not really beautiful; she was not actually clever; she certainly could lay no claim to family. Was it style, was it audacity, was it experience, was it the genius of worldliness? Could this be the model that

the great work of reconstruction designed by her, Aurelia West, must follow—a model so shocking yet so impelling? Yet *was* it so shocking, after all? Who if not the Pasdenoms gave the tone to the capital which she herself had voluntarily selected as a place of residence? Who else set the pace, governed the mode, suggested and regulated manners, costume, amusements? But to deliberately pattern the reconstructed Chatelaine on such lines as these—oh, no; there must be a dreadful hitch in her logic somewhere; surely there must be some other theory upon which she could proceed, and she must have the wit to frame it.

Aurelia, in fact, was feeling within her the impulse to produce a work of art. Some of the ideas on this subject that Fin-de-Siècle and the Governor had battledored back and forth had fallen to the ground—good ground—and now, watered by Aurelia's assiduous regard for the Chatelaine, promised to spring up and to produce an abundant harvest. Aurelia had no hope of achieving a work of art that could be ranged in any conventional or recognized class. She fully realized that the grandest productions of the native American genius had not been brought about by the work of man in clay or color or catgut or caligraphy, but by the working of man on man. She should not attempt to subdue marble or to make color captive, but she was anxious to show what might result from the working of woman on woman.

Well, then, to go over the ground again carefully and in a different direction. Here was the Chatelaine, whose attractive personality had been thoroughly canvassed already. Consider now her status. She was

the last of a long race—two grandfathers, four great-grandfathers, eight great-great-grandfathers, and so on and on—each of the series possessed of a name and title, a niche in history, and a portrait in the family gallery. She held her position in her own right; on her had descended the accumulated fortunes of the family; from her high-perched castle she swayed it over a valley of peasantry doting and complaisant, no doubt, to a degree: what position more lofty, more gracious, more noble? Ah! she had it! The whole situation was brilliantly clear, absurdly simple. It was merely a case of goddess and pedestal; only the goddess must be made to feel that she *was* a goddess, and to see that her proper place was not beside the pedestal, but upon it. And now a friendly Intelligence had come to show the divinity how to mount to her place, or, if need be, to actually lift her to it. And under these altered conditions worship would follow as a matter of course.

Such, in brief, was the program evolved by the transported Aurelia while the carriage rolled rapidly along on its graveled way and the Baroness and the Chatelaine sat silent side by side. Not merely those uncertain young men were to see what she could do, but the Governor himself should be a witness to her skill; he was to see all of his own lofty lucubrations about arrangement and presentation and the rest reduced to working order. And as for her own poor self—that was a paltry candle to be snuffed forthwith, since all the light was to fall on quite a different part of the stage. So overjoyed was she to think that Providence had sent the Chatelaine a friend so

dexterous, so sympathetic, so self-sacrificing, that she broke the stern silence with a laugh—a most undeniable one. Both her companions looked at her disapprovingly, and she felt that in the Chatelaine's eyes she had slipped back to the precarious ground on which she had stood at Lucerne, while the aspect of the Baroness was such as to make it seem likely that the rest of her visit might have to be spent in reinstating herself in her hostess's good graces.

Aurelia fancied that she had already made a very fair estimate of the Schloss, but she received quite a new impression of the possibilities of the place and of the general pleasantness of hereditary distinction on the occasion of the celebration of Zeitgeist's own birthday, for which fête the banners were indeed hung on the outward walls, and the cry might well have been, "They come!" The magnates of the district came with their wives and daughters; the sons came with their spurs and sabers; the tenantry came tramping up the valley and flocking down from the mountains with music and addresses and torches and hurrahs. What a delightful situation, thought Aurelia—this right to cheers as a mere matter of rank and descent. How vastly better than the situation in poor, crude America, where if a man wanted hurrahs he must hurrah for himself.

The turmoil of preparation for this observance put our enthusiastic Aurelia quite beside herself. What a grand opportunity to take the Chatelaine's measure, to hold a full-dress rehearsal of the drama which was to be enacted at La Trinité, to revise the draperies of the statue before it came to rest on its own proper

base! With what emotion did Aurelia lift these draperies from the recesses of the biggest of her big trunks! They appertained to the one conspicuously magnificent creation of the entire wardrobe, a Parisian inspiration, the emanation of a master-mind—a talent of such a high order that (to many of its patrons) only a thin partition divided it from genius—a mind that, when it judged itself, broke through even this. It was this garment that Aurelia herself had fondly hoped to wear; but with a look of high resolve she thrust this flattering idea aside, and when she glanced at herself in the mirror she was rewarded by seeing if not a martyr at least a heroine. Her mind was big with one idea, her imagination was in a state of conflagration; and it lit up an image of a beautiful creature (adequately attired) sailing in stately fashion down the crimson covering of a marble staircase, while a loud announcement heralded the coming of The Most Noble and Highborn (supposing that to be the proper form), the Lady Berthe Gloiredesalpes (supposing that to be the exact name), the Chatelaine of La Trinité—and the This of That, and the That of Theother (which sketchy string of titles stood subject, of course, to revision in the light of later and more detailed information). After which burst of poetic frenzy the sibyl confessed herself exhausted, and threw herself upon her bed.

But not to lie there long; she was too excited to rest, and there was a good deal to do before she could adjust the Chatelaine to her new attire. For the Chatelaine had none too high a notion of her own merits, and she was inclined to hang back a little

bashfully from so novel an experience; even when she had finally been induced to try things on experimentally it was seen that a good many changes would have to be made before the ideal was reached. There was the matter of gloves and shoes, too—Aurelia's hands and feet were absurdly small. These and kindred matters necessitated a good deal of snipping and basting within the castle, and repeated excursions down to Meran as well.

But the end crowns the work, and when the Chatelaine finally came to stand before the clustered wax-lights that surrounded Aurelia's long mirror and took a final view of herself previous to treading the crimson-covered marbles which had filled so important a place in the mind of her imaginative friend, the artist joyfully expressed her unqualified satisfaction. The Chatelaine gazed at her own reflection with big, startled eyes, and as she moved about and heard the low swish and rustle of the silk and lace and tulle dragging behind her a fearful joy possessed her, her spirit rose mettlesomely, new vistas of surpassing reach and splendor opened before her, and life, she began to feel, included a great many things whose existence she had not heretofore even suspected. Then the high-priestess administered the final touch —with a powder-puff. There was really no practical reason for this, since the Chatelaine's complexion was perfect. Perhaps Aurelia regarded this rite as a kind of secular sacrament by which the Chatelaine was admitted into society.

The Governor was startled, delighted, electrified. He would have asked nothing better than to spend

the whole long evening in wrapt contemplation of his metamorphosed godchild; but the Baroness appreciated him almost as much as he appreciated the Chatelaine. She knew that but for certain disagreeable events in the first years of the century her guest might have been a reigning prince—not Professor, but Elector—and so she was disposed to make the most of him. The Governor always professed to be bored by this particular line of historical reminiscence, and perhaps he was. He almost always told the truth; so I suppose we may believe him—or not. The Baroness had an idea, too (quite an erroneous one), that the Governor was an old man, and she considered that she was properly placing him and honoring him when she led him to the card-room, with the other elders, and sat down opposite him for a game of cribbage. But his play could not have increased the Baroness's admiration. It was erratic, terribly *mal à propos*, constantly disturbed by little fits and starts as the crowd of young people surged by, and incessantly punctured by sudden sidelong glances through doors and windows. The Baroness cut, shuffled, dealt, and pegged with her pudgy hands, counting up the Governor's knave of trumps once or twice, and frequently seeing fifteen-six where he had seen but fifteen-four. She presently gave up her place to her sister-in-law, who cut, shuffled, dealt, and pegged with *her* pudgy hands, catching the Governor's knave once or twice more, and seeing fifteen-six where he had seen but fifteen-two. Meanwhile, whiffs of perfume and melody came floating in from without, there was a muffled sound of shuffling feet from the ball-room, and now

and then the tones of fresh young voices came in through the windows that opened on the terrace. The Governor blundered on, misdealing, misplaying, miscounting, while the sister-in-law raised her surprised eyebrows higher and higher until once they were almost lost under her wig. Then, all of a sudden, the Governor threw down his hand face up, and rose to his feet. His startled opponent looked toward the wide doorway, too: the Chatelaine was passing. She trailed by in a kind of slow and stately splendor on the arm of a tall young cavalry officer. Her face was delicately flushed, her eyes sparkled with a vivacious sense of triumph, and she lowered her high-poised head to the Governor in such a fashion as to leave the old gentleman weak and trembling with delight. Behind her, in company with a Serene Insignificancy from Vienna, walked Aurelia; she was looking out sharply on the Chatelaine's behalf for entangling spurs, and was holding herself in readiness to administer stimulant in case the conversation required it, being seldom at a loss for a notion and never for a word. She did not look especially magnificent, having given the Chatelaine not only the best of her wardrobe, but the best of her jewel-case as well; yet her face glowed with pleasure, and it was a face, let me say, to which nothing was more becoming than an idea.

Aurelia's satisfaction was complete when Zeitgeist put on a grand manner—he wore his spectacles, too —and took the Chatelaine in to supper. She saw that he did not do this simply because the Chatelaine was a special and particular guest, nor because of his mere

indebtedness to the Governor. No; he did it because he enjoyed doing it, and he did it as if the doing conferred a distinction upon himself. Ah, very good; the young man was not blind, after all; he recognized the sun when he saw it shining. And there were others to whose notice she should like to bring the same heavenly phenomenon.

During the few remaining days of their stay other fêtes followed at other places, and it gratified Aurelia to see the Chatelaine's altered attitude. She apprehended this new world quite keenly, she entered into it with a satisfactory readiness and self-possession, and it began to look as if she were soon to be completely at home in it and thoroughly committed to it. In nothing was this shown more clearly than in the manner with which Bertha met Zeitgeist's suggestions for excursions—Meran being nothing if not excursional, while walks and points of view abound. Every other height for miles up and down the valley, for instance, held out its ruined castle; the Chatelaine walked up to one or two of them, though with some indifference. Why did they offer her castles draped with ivy and dedicated to the dismal owl, when others just as near were garlanded with flowers and flooded with the melody of the waltz? They talked tentatively to her of the Alps of the Oetzthal, of the snow-peaks and glaciers of the Ortler; but she had lived, thought, eaten, breathed mountains all her life, and she was now beginning to feel that nothing would please her more, say, than to put on a long-trained gown and trail it through Holland. The Baroness took her to the old residence of the counts

of Tyrol in Meran, and put before her its display of frescoes and painted glass and armorial bearings; but the Chatelaine saved her interest for the Kurhaus, the band, and the promenade. The Governor rambled about alone, picking up his pebbles and his flowers for himself. The old order was changing; the powder-puff had begun to do its work.

VIII.

VERONA: NEL REGNO D'AMORE.

THE Chatelaine's share in the musical doings at the Schloss did not end with her tripping to other people's pipings, for she did a little piping of her own —if one may allude in such a way to the piano, the only instrument over which she had command. For the spoils of Salzburg yielded many a duet and trio, nor

was Zeitgeist without such a knack in the direction of musical notation as was required to fasten a few of his own ideas on paper. The fount of melody was beginning to flow within him, and he had his piano trundled out to a certain arbored corner of the terrace, from which retreat the mingled tones of that somewhat discredited instrument and the violoncello rose on several afternoons to the ears of the Baroness in her chamber above. Their work was principally on compositions of his own, most of them having been turned out, too, since their emergence from the Dolomites. There were few trios among them, the *flauto traverso* having more or less dropped out of the combination; but Aurelia West pleased herself with the belief that many of them were duets. A more discriminating critic would have detected their true nature; they were simply 'cello solos, as elaborate and showy as the Baron's technique permitted, with accompaniments, quite simple and completely subordinate, for the piano. But Aurelia was no critic; so when Zeitgeist's little finger trembled with a pathetic wabbling on the A string, or his middle one slid with a desolating moan the full length of the D, or a light touch from one or the other sent canary-like harmonics through the trellised vines about them (the poor Chatelaine, meanwhile, pegging away steadily with her prosaic chords), their listener almost saw the heavens opening. She even forgave Zeitgeist for having once told her, as they sat in front of the Casino at Interlaken, that the selection the band was playing was the "Ah, che la morte," that this air was from "Il Trovatore," and that "Il Trovatore" was an Italian

opera by Verdi. And after he had given the Chatelaine a little piece which he had composed for her and dedicated to her, Aurelia would have forgiven him even worse.

And she forgave him all future offenses, too, when he said that he had half an idea of accompanying them part way down to Italy. On the Governor's suggesting that they might leave the railway at Trent and piece out the journey with a carriage-drive along the shore of the Lake of Garda, the other half of the idea reached him, and when it came time to set out, his baggage was in as complete readiness as theirs. Aurelia attributed all this to the Chatelaine, quite choosing to ignore the fact that Zeitgeist and the Governor usually got along very pleasantly together, and the other fact that the curling waves of Garda, along with the pillared vineyards and lemon groves of Riva, made a sufficient reason of themselves. But even the finest mind cannot hope to cover a wide field completely.

It was the middle of the second afternoon when the carriage turned away from the shores of Garda and struck out over the highway to Verona. And it was within some ten miles of Verona that their vetturino made his last halt for rest and water. This occurred at a little town that spread itself out long and thin in its attempt to inclose a large piazza—a piazza dull and grass-grown, with a café and a locanda vis-à-vis. And while suitable refreshments were being ordered on one side of this inclosure, our friends noticed a small crowd collected on the other—sixty or seventy people, but half the population of the place—where a

mountebank show appeared to be in progress. Two or three men in loose and shabby trunks were trying to fasten more firmly a set of turning-bars, while a horn and a clarinet rasped the excited nerves of the bystanders. Three or four tiny chaps, their fathers in miniature, stood timidly about, subject to a call now and then from a frowzy head thrust through the flaps of a covered wagon; while a tall, stout young woman with a head of tousled blonde hair posed around in soiled tights and short gauzy petticoats, and made an occasional sally at the audience with an extended tambourine—a gesture whose significance few of them seemed to comprehend. Within twenty feet of her an empty carriage stood before the door of the inn, and when she saw a full one on the opposite side of the square she crossed over bareheaded through the sun with a long, heavy, swinging stride, and a dozen ragged little urchins at her heels. She appeared to be a simple, stolid, good-natured young person, to whom business was but business, and to whom the ephemerality of gentry on wheels was a well-ascertained fact. The young ladies viewed her with a considerate interest and did not encourage Zeitgeist in his feint of having impressed her, and the Governor gave her a florin.

They had already noticed the empty carriage on the other side of the square, and they concluded that it belonged to a small party of people who, they ascertained, were seated beneath a striped awning on a balcony over the inn door; they appeared to be dividing the suffrages of the town with the performers, whose slow dullness they were endeavoring to spur on with

an ironical applause. The show, however, went on its own limping way—long preparation, great promise, little performance—a vast parade of hoops and poles, a loud din of march and polka, a gradually dawning belief on the part of the simple-minded villagers that something was really going to happen, yet everything flat, riskless, inconsequent. All at once another figure emerged from the doorway of the inn—a tall, dark man, whose body carried trunks and tights like the rest, with the full allowance of frayed lace and tarnished tinsel, but whose face showed an amused, indulgent, condescending smile that none of the others could have achieved in ten generations. His large, full neck rose from a deep chest and a broad pair of shoulders, and his arms, bare to the pits, showed forth all the muscles of the accomplished athlete. He advanced with a strong, springy step, and then with a long leap he suddenly launched himself upon the bars, on which he turned, spun, balanced, swung,—all with the conscious mastery of one who fully knows the ropes. The horn and the clarinet, after their first gasp of surprise, fell to with redoubled vigor, the assembled urchins shrieked with a shrill delight, and a group of sunbrowned women with shawls over their heads looked on with a fascinated stare. More twists and turns, more springings and swingings; then some vaulting; then some mighty juggling with dumb-bells. A lady who sat up under the awning had rested a magnificent bunch of great flowers on the railing before her; she tore them eagerly apart and showered them down with both hands. Some one behind her clapped his palms together and called out, "Bis, bis!" in a

high, tenor-like voice. The athlete stuck one of the flowers in his belt, scooped up a dozen more of them and gave them with a flourish to the girl of the tambourine, satirically acknowledged the applause of the villagers and of the mountebanks themselves, ran his long fingers through his damp locks, and stalked back into the inn.

The Governor looked at Bertha and Aurelia, Bertha looked at Aurelia and the Governor, Aurelia looked at the Governor and Bertha, and Zeitgeist looked at all three, wondering. This acrobat was the man whom they had met on the Lucerne steamer, and who had called himself the Marquis of Tempo-Rubato. They had scaled him down from a nobleman to an inferior opera-singer; now, it seemed, they must reduce him from this last grade to that of a mere strolling tumbler. In what rôle would he next appear? That of an ashman, a rag-picker? Could insolent assurance go farther? The Governor ordered the vetturino to an immediate advance on Verona. Nor need he spare his horses; the greater the speed the greater the relief.

Thus, under the impulse of indignation, the pleasant town of Verona came presently into view, with amelioration in the towering campanile of the Municipio, the long front of the lofty fortress, and the soaring cypresses of the Giusti gardens. Sunset found them domiciled in a little hotel which was situated on a back street, but which fronted immediately on the river—an establishment to which Zeitgeist had guided them, and in whose German-speaking waiters and porcelain stoves he took a certain national pride. They dined in front of the house on a fish which an engaging

waiter had lately brought up from the stream expressly for their meal, and the same atmosphere of general *gemüthlichkeit* was presently lulling them all to a slumberous forgetfulness of Latin effrontery.

No town can have a stronger claim on the regard of the appreciative traveler than Verona. Few monuments are nobler than its Roman arena or its Lombardic churches; few inclosures more picturesque than its churchyard of Maria Antica with the Gothic monuments of the Scaligers, or its Piazza delle Erbe cluttered with the white umbrellas of the market-women; few streams more quaintly pictorial than the rapid Adige bearing up its flock of mills on bobbing scows; few gardens more grateful than those of the Villa Giusti, pierced by steep avenues that lead up to a wide view of Alps and Apennines. But all these were not the things that the active mind of Aurelia West was most concerned with. She now regarded the visit to Verona in the light of a pilgrimage (however she might have regarded it a month previously), and it was not Verona as much as the Amanti di Verona that filled her thoughts.

It is in places like Verona, full of features of the second rank but without one of absolutely the first, that a large party may fall a victim to some one of its members who happens to have a definite idea. Aurelia West had a definite idea, and it led them all, without let, hindrance, or delay, to the mansion of the Capulets.

Medieval magnificence, like medieval manners, needs to be judged by a standard more or less its own, a truth not fully realized by this enthusiastic cicerone. She had seen most of the great Juliets of the day—

there are dozens of them, scores—and she was quite familiar with the fervid imaginings that provided each with her own "scenic investiture." But the actual home of the Capulets is pitched in a key much more subdued, and if Aurelia's mind had not been in the broadly poetic condition that can digest all crudities and incongruities, she might have left this lordly and storied house with a sense of disappointment—this house "whence," as we learn from the tableted front, "whence fled that Juliet for whom so many tender hearts have mourned, so many poets sung."

The house is doubly authenticated. Besides this inscription there is the "cappelletto," the little stone hat, which is set over the low archway leading to the inner court, and which has come to be almost as well known as the papal tiara. It was under this archway that the first member of the family came to greet them—a personage whom the Governor (willing to amuse and to be amused) identified as the bloody Tybalt; and he, in the midst of a lamentable outcry, was driving forth a little Montague who seemed to have been pulling the hair of one of the little Capulets. It was he, in fact, that drew their attention to the "cappelletto," and his crooked fingers and yearning eye seemed to hint that such a service was entitled to recognition. The rest of the family were also found at home, though not especially prepared for visitors; six centuries of the glare of publicity have probably rendered them indifferent. Nor was the stage set with the ornate care that we have come to expect for the latter part of Act I.; the courtyard was noisy with a great ado of horses and donkeys and carts and wagons

and water-drawing, while spread around over many balconies sat many of the company quite careless of their cues. Up in that of the second story was old Capulet smacking noisily—he always is rather noisy, if you recollect—over a plate of soup, and on the next stage above appeared the Nurse, knitting a sock, but not allowing that to interrupt the flow of gossip with other females of the house. A girl drawing water at the well Zeitgeist claimed to identify as the heroine herself, though the Governor proposed another candidate for the honor—one high up in the loftiest balcony of all. She glanced back and forth between the visitors and something that she held in her hand—an implement that the Governor declared to be a curling-iron, though Zeitgeist contemptuously termed it a lemon-squeezer. But there seemed to be no tendency to rant in either young woman, and so the point remained undecided. The matter of the balcony was more perplexing still; the entire courtyard was balconied only too thoroughly, to say nothing of the front of the house itself. The puzzled eye of the Chatelaine roamed about hither and thither in a vain attempt to find some place to rest, and Aurelia (who was pleased to notice that Bertha was taking matters with an appropriate seriousness) plaintively inquired if *the* balcony might not look on some garden or other behind the house. They came away with that point left open, too; but Zeitgeist had attempted no heavy-handed analysis of the Juliet-myth, the Governor's recollection of Julia Placidia had kept him in a mood tenderly considerate, and Aurelia was therefore able to regard their visit as a reasonable success.

The House of the Capulets disposed of, Aurelia's next achievement was the tomb of Juliet. The one she had approached with respect, but the other she drew nigh to with reverence; it was all the difference, in fact, between narthex and sanctuary.

The road to this place of sepulture is long and devious, and leads by way of barracks and stone-yards and stretches of dusty openness to a remote edge of the town. Aurelia and the Chatelaine carried between them a large pasteboard box, whose contents seemed precious beyond their weight, and demurely followed the Governor, who himself followed the seven-year-old boy that was acting as their guide. They had thrown themselves on his good offices at one period of their pilgrimage when the way had seemed involved in grave uncertainty, and the Governor, who was fond of talking with little boys who had black eyes and bare legs, left the two young women to entertain each other and to guard the wreath. The Governor had asked the lad who "Giuletta" might be, and he had simply replied that she was "morta" (dead). The precocity of this answer and the assurance which it conveyed that they were not proceeding on false premises quite charmed the old gentleman, and he rewarded the child for this brief obituary on a scale that might almost have seemed lavish for a complete biography.

Just at the entrance to the garden they encountered two gentlemen; the first was Fin-de-Siècle and the second was Tempo-Rubato, whose present aspect rather delayed recognition. Both were perspiring freely, though the day was cool, and Aurelia conjec-

tured that, despite their leisurely manner, they had been following from afar and had taken a hurried cut to reach the gate first. Tempo-Rubato in his present guise suggested neither an ashman nor a rag-picker. He wore a black frock-coat, a pair of pearl-gray trousers, a high hat, and a flower in his buttonhole; and our friends, who had never before seen him in the ordinary dress of every-day life, were willing enough to acknowledge that under a combination of felicitous circumstances the ideal of the tailor's fashion-plate might readily be reached. Clothed he was, indeed; and Aurelia hoped that he was in his right mind, too: certainly this was no place to balance on a tight rope stretched between decency and indecency. And as for Fin-de-Siècle, let him but repeat in this sacred place the tactics which had almost turned the interment of Julia Placidia into a travesty, and it would cost him the acquaintance of all three. But Aurelia did not regret the coming of this pair; she was firm in the faith, and what better place was there to combat heresy than at the altar itself? They had probably come to scoff; perhaps they might remain to pray.

The two young men lifted their hats with a careless ease and came forward with all confidence and complacency. Neither of them had seriously taken Miss West as a person of any great importance, or had treated the Chatelaine with a much greater degree of deference than she had been able to exact. Tempo-Rubato, indeed, appeared to think that it would be a very simple matter to resume the easy attitude of the Lucerne steamer, with all its general informality of a midsummer outing, but he now found a line drawn

that he did not remember to have noticed before. The Chatelaine received them both with a stately reserve—she had come to think less highly of them and more highly of herself; and Aurelia, who was able to carry an air in chorus when she might have faltered in a solo, did what she could to make still more plain to the young men that if they expected to please they might as well put forth their best endeavors—that their best would be none too good for a young woman of some position and consequence.

Tempo-Rubato could read a fairly legible hand, even when the t's were not crossed nor the i's dotted; he felt, too, that the bandbox barred all levity. He was as adaptable as an eel, and he would take the pitch of any key that was struck. And if Fin-de-Siècle was too stiff in his own conceit to bend—why, a little dash of cold water would nullify almost any amount of starch.

The tomb of Juliet, as all the world of travel knows, rests in a sort of little open chapel which sets snugly against the wall of an old monastic building that stands in a humble kitchen-garden. In the spring you find the place brightened up by multitudinous apple-blossoms—to say nothing of the shining lettuce and the cheerful pea; warm sunlight, too, and blue sky. But to-day the sky was thinly veiled with clouds, the first yellow leaves of autumn had begun to flutter down, the peas had left their bare beds behind them, only a few lettuces spindled tallishly in a remote corner, and a mild young man with watery blue eyes was dejectedly raking up the paths.

This young man leaned his rake against one of the apple-trees, and led the visitors to the small triple

arcade behind which rests the poor old battered sarcophagus whose litter of calling-cards represents the élite of all Philistia. Aurelia shuddered as she recalled one of the Colony who had told her that their whole party of ten had left their cards for Juliet, and blushed to recall how eager she herself had once been to do the same. Their guide drew attention to a dilapidated old portrait of a dilapidated old ecclesiastic hanging close by, and when the Governor asked him if it was a Capulet, he replied that it represented the brother of Giuletta's confessor. This young man had an ingenuous face and an honest blue eye, and appeared to believe what he was saying; but perhaps his researches had been incomplete, or his critical sense not fully developed, or perhaps he had been misled by hearsay, or perhaps he had innocently accepted the statement from some colleague whose pleasure it was to test how far the traveler might believe. Fin-de-Siècle flecked his card into the sarcophagus, patted the young gardener confidentially on the back, and told him that he had a precious work there which he must guard most carefully; the next time they came that way they might bring him a companion-piece — a portrait of the stepmother of the second cousin of Giuletta's nurse.

Every one ignored this outrageous sally. Tempo-Rubato frowned and then stepped forward, and declaimed sonorously some little verses with the refrain:

> "Io t'amo ora e sempre,
> Romeo, il mio ben."

Aurelia, too, attempted to put into Italian some portion of the celebrated controversy over the lark and

the nightingale, when a distant sound of cock-crowing came to amuse the Parisian scoffer. Whereupon Tempo-Rubato, with a loud promptness, declared his admiration for the great English librettist, who, however, preferred to accent "Romeo" on the first syllable, just as he accented "Desdemona" on the third. Then he assisted Aurelia to place the wreath properly, and he also found a suitable situation for the little set of elegiac stanzas which the Chatelaine had composed. She had written them in French on a tiny card and in pale violet ink. He furthermore embellished this card with his *boutonnière*, and the grateful Aurelia acknowledged to herself that he was really capable of civilized conduct after all.

She hesitated to make the same concession in regard to Fin-de-Siècle, however much, indeed, he considered the civilized as his own peculiar forte. Certainly if his Étude showed no more tact, sympathy, insight and adaptability than its author did, it was likely to prove but sorry reading. However, he, equally with Tempo-Rubato, was beginning to show a creditable disposition to revise his style of address toward the Chatelaine. On the way back to town they both walked with the Lady of La Trinité, and Aurelia, left behind with the Governor (a neglect which would have touched her keenly a month ago), was glad to notice the dawn of a deference which was clearly the Chatelaine's due. The attitude of these young men toward the maid of Verona was really a matter of secondary consequence; it was neither to make nor mar the real success of Aurelia's idea, since the heroine of the poet toward whom her thoughts were most definitely turning was

neither Juliet, however permeating, nor Desdemona, however accented. No; her mind's eye was fixing a firm gaze on the gracious Lady of Belmont, and in the Chatelaine her idealizing worshiper was already beginning to see the Portia of the High Alps; while the Belmont toward which their steps were moving was not a palace on the Brenta, but a château among the snow-peaks of the Valais.

The Chatelaine herself was still without an adequate realization of the rôle for which she was cast; a distinct gain, since she approximated the dignity of her lofty model without reaching, as yet, its self-consciousness. She pursued the accustomed tenor of her way with no heed of drama or of spectacle; while Nerissa fidgeted about in her homely little room at the Albergo della Graticola, and burned with an eager desire to shift the scenery and set forth the properties of La Trinité.

IX.

BELLAGIO: THE GODDESS MANIFEST.

THE interval between the reunion at the gateway of Juliet's garden and the ceremony at her tomb was brief, but it had been long enough for Aurelia West to inform Tempo-Rubato that the acrobatic fantasy at Iduelegni had had other witnesses than those to whom it had been especially addressed, and to pointedly intimate to him that it might

be proper for him to declare his real status before the present occasion was much older. She had been as peremptory as she dared, and had awaited his explanation with the air of one who has brought up a delinquent with a good round turn. But Tempo-Rubato had been in no wise abashed nor embarrassed nor even inconvenienced. He had simply laughed loud and long—a laugh to flood a shrine with profanation—and had asked them, all three impartially, what they had thought of it, anyway. There had been no denial, no subterfuge, no palliation, no explanation whatever; and they were simply left to feel that this erratic person must be allowed the widest claim he cared to make, must be granted full freedom on the highest plane he chose to occupy, and to dumbly wonder under what aspect he would see fit next to present himself.

This next aspect was offered at Bellagio, and presented a transition from apple-green fustian to navy-blue serge. Our two young ladies were just ending a morning's loitering stroll on the terrace of their hotel, when a small craft happened to pass by within a hundred feet of the shore. It was one of the kind common to the Lake of Como, but was gilded, curtained, upholstered to the verge of the operatic. The glorious azure plain of Como might straightway have become a mere muddy puddle, and the towering crest of Crocione but a bald and inconspicuous mound, and the smiling undulations of the Tremezzino simply the flat vacuity of a prairie farm, for all the heed that Aurelia West now gave them; for the craft before her was impelled by a young man in the garb (full-rigged

and more) of the sailor—widening trousers, a low, broad-brimmed straw hat, a wide, low-cut, anchor-embroidered collar, a gold-fringed sash of white silk—and the passenger was a lady who lolled back under the same parasol that had illumined the quay at Lucerne, and who lazily admired the quick and supple muscularity of her ornately attired crew.

Aurelia asked the Governor at lunch if he considered the *salon* of their hotel at all adapted to the giving of a concert. The Governor sent out a questioning look full of startled apprehension, as if to inquire what was in the wind now. It was the look of a man who feels the ground shifting beneath his feet—of a man whose recent experiences have made it worth his while to wonder what will happen next. He had entered upon this little tour simply as a quiet scientific gentleman whose tastes were subdued and whose requirements were extremely moderate, certain that what was good enough for him was good enough for the unexacting Chatelaine, and that what would please them both would assuredly suffice for their guest. But his status at just the present moment was something of a puzzle to him. It seemed now and then as if his eyes caught distant glimpses of the flaunting of banners, as if his ears detected remotely the half-smothered clamor of trumpets, as if his nostrils were being tickled by fumes wafted from invisible censers; and there were hours when their modest little excursion seemed to have merged into something almost equaling a progress. And one day, after an hour's quiet cogitation in a retired corner of the garden, he became satisfied as to the identity of the chief figure in this triumphal march

—reaching the result by a process of elimination. In the first place, it was not he himself. True, there were moments when he felt that the cheeks of the genius of Fame showed a tendency to unduly distend themselves on his account; he was daily hearing himself addressed by new and ingenious titles supposed to fittingly recognize his eminence, and this eminence had been further confessed by unexpected attentions from various officials in the minor towns lying between Verona and Milan. Yet, on the other hand, he often felt himself degraded to almost the level of a lackey: it was fetch and carry, do this and do that—a long and unceasing string of minor attentions which Aurelia West expected and demanded, and in which even the Chatelaine, careless of her gray-haired guardian, completely acquiesced.

In the second place, the chief figure of the progress was not their guest from Paris. True, she was showing an increasing disposition to flaunt her magnificent apparel here, there, and everywhere, in places high and low, in season and out, and she was developing a capacity for haughty insolence toward hotel-keepers and their dependents that almost chilled the old gentleman's blood. But, on the other side, for every inch that she exalted herself in public she would humble herself a foot in private; and when the Governor had seen her a few times running about nervously with her mouth full of pins, and had once encountered her in a dark hall-way with a shoe of the Chatelaine's in one hand and a tiny blacking-brush in the other, he saw that Aurelia West was not burning to be the Princess, but only the Princess's devoted slave.

There was only one of them left—the Chatelaine herself. It must be for her, then, that they had given up their quiet and pleasant inn at Verona and had transferred themselves to another, larger, showier, more expensive. It was for her that Fin-de-Siècle was always being sent trotting about for carriages and coachmen, that Tempo-Rubato would be dispatched for ciceroni and sagrestani to open up famous places at distinguishedly unusual hours, and that Aurelia West had so willingly metamorphosed herself into a lady's maid. It was for her that the hotel-keeper at Brescia had bowed down with obsequious devotion and that the half-dozen eager waiters had tumbled over each other's heels; it was for her that the sindaco of Bergamo had driven up to the door of their inn with a carriage and pair; it was for her that he himself had been left to spend three dismal days in the Brera at Milan, staring at casts, coins, and madonnas, while Aurelia organized and led a triumphal tour among the shops of the Corso and the Galleria. The Governor studiously contracted his eyebrows as he stared through the white walls of Cadenabbia across the lake and rubbed his nose thoughtfully with his long forefinger. Well, after all, the dear child was worth it.

But he might have spared himself an uneasy apprehension that the indefatigable Aurelia was designing to organize an entertainment at the hotel with the Chatelaine as chief patroness; and Aurelia, too, might have spared herself any apprehension that Mdlle. Pasdenom was intending to duplicate here her performance at Meran; for the Duchess had dismissed her three or

four remaining voices, and, having thus stripped herself of the last shreds of opera comique, was indulging in a fortnight of unadulterated rest preparatory to her autumnal engagements in Paris itself. Meanwhile, she was established in the other big hotel at the far end of the town, and was daily doing Cleopatra-on-the-Cydnus, as far as circumstances and surroundings permitted—the resemblance being greatest, of course, on those occasions when Antony was not required to furnish the motive power as well as the devotion.

But the lake was free for all, and its shores were made accessible to all by frequent steamers. Aurelia twice covered the course from Como to Colico, and once she made a side excursion down into the arm at whose end stands Lecco, and on all these occasions she passed the panorama in review with the ferret-like, undeviating gaze of the specialist. The sheer fall of mountain-side and the white tumbling of cascades she viewed with complete indifference; the busy activities of quarry and silk manufactory were so completely ignored as to even pass unresented; the fine pictorialness of church-tower and monastery was taken in unconsciously, if at all; while the crumbling walls of untenanted castles and fortresses seemed to strike her as anachronous to a degree; but for every distant glint struck by the sun on balustraded terrace, for every glimpse of pediment or colonnade caught through groves of cedar and magnolia, her eyes were keen indeed. In fact, Aurelia's sole concern in all this was to discover a villa ideally suitable for the enigmatic son of the Duke of Largo. Before long she did discover it—but not from the deck of the steamer.

For, on a certain afternoon, one of the insinuating boatmen of Bellagio, with more heed to profit than to meteorology, had tempted our friends out upon the water at a time when the prospect for wind and rain seemed more than commonly good. Within half an hour the prospect became a certainty, and a strong wind and a high sea drove them straight to shore. They effected their haphazard landing at a flight of broad and easy marble steps which broke through a long and stately terrace to lead down to the water between rows of sculptured vases rioting with flowers, and which led up to avenues of box and clipped ilex adorned with multifarious statues. And when a brilliant figure in white flannels came hastening down one of these stately paths to assist them in alighting, the transported Aurelia rose to the situation on the wings of ecstasy. Here at last was the villa of Tempo-Rubato, and it was the master himself that had come to welcome them. Tempo-Rubato knew nothing of this ecstasy, but he had a sharp sense of atmospheric conditions; yet with all his haste to get the Governor and his charges under shelter, he had barely done so before the storm broke.

It was sharp and sudden, short yet violent; a gusty roar, an ominous lashing of waters, a heavy downpour, a touch of thunder and lightning; then the infuriated beauty quieted her heaving bosom and veiled her flashing eyes and bound down her flying hair and stilled her angry clamor, and presently Como, save for a murmur reminiscent of rebellion, was herself again.

Within a quarter of an hour the sky was clearly blue, and Tempo-Rubato walked forth with his guests,

accompanied by his parents, who were spending a month with him in villeggiatura, and by Fin-de-Siècle, who sprang up from somewhere or other, and who announced himself as on his way back to Paris. The broad gravel walks trickled with their last rivulets, the polished masses of box and laurel tingled with a million raindrops, the white walls of villas and hamlets glistened on many a remote mountain-slope, and a full-arched rainbow hung out its flag of truce from shore to shore. Through this scene Tempo-Rubato, fully *en prince* at last, led the way with an air of easy and gracious mastery. The Chatelaine was simply enchanted by the spectacle, and did not hesitate to so express herself.

As for the splendors of the villa itself, they impressed her almost to the verge of discomfort. The pictorial stateliness of the Vintschgau had not been without its effect upon her, but the difference between that and what she had previously experienced had been but one of degree. Here, now, was a difference of kind; never before had she encountered anything as suave, as luxurious, as spaciously serene, as indolently graceful. Every glimpse of cloud-wreathed mountain-peaks seen down long avenues of ilex overawed her; every glance at the blue expanse of waters caught through openings in statued and arcaded galleries but acted as a spur toward the adequate expression of her delight.

This undisguised appreciation was not at all to the taste of Aurelia West, who did not care to have the Chatelaine show herself so completely pleased, so powerfully impressed. She herself accordingly drew

on a weary and half-disdainful air, as if her own infancy and childhood had been passed in villas of uncommon splendor, and as if she had tired of all such long years ago. She entered upon a quiet little course of disparagement by means of cross-references to other travel experiences: she drew upon the outskirts of Vienna and the environs of Paris, where, as she more than intimated, features of equal magnificence were not altogether wanting; and she reminded the prostrate Chatelaine of one or two rather fine things in the ancestral home of Zeitgeist which found no fellows here. Propped up by such aids as these, the Chatelaine was not completely bowed and broken by Tempo-Rubato's grandiose environment; but she went through an ordeal which tried to the uttermost their united fortitude when the Marchese summoned them subsequently to a grand fête, when moonlight, music, fireworks, and what not besides, combined to nearly vanquish this simple-minded girl, and to even modify the *nil admirari* attitude of her friend.

The Governor found himself at home among the serried nymphs and goddesses of Tempo-Rubato's freshened elysium—personages whom the old Duke pointed out as well as he knew how—and he jotted down with some nimbleness one or two little notions that he fancied might do very nicely at Avenches. He even begged from Tempo-Rubato a slight pencil-sketch of the uncommonly effective landing-stage, from which to complete his own new marmorata; and he carried away a ground-plan and a perspective view which their host cleverly slap-dashed down on a page torn from his note-book. Fin-de-Siècle, too, scratched

down his own little impression on the sensitive mind of the old gentleman when he informed him, at one stage of their progress through the grounds, that he had just dispatched his last chapters to Paris. This was done in a tone most marked—one sinister and even threatening; and the Governor, whose mind sometimes moved with a bounding intuition that was little less than feminine, instantly saw himself figuring between the pages of a book, and none too flatteringly, either. He sighed and shuddered; were all the rites of hospitality powerless to exorcise the demon of publicity? And if he himself figured among the dramatis personæ, how about his associates? If he were the *père noble*—or ignoble, as he rather feared—how, then, as to the heroine?—an inquiry that he trembled to pursue.

But this ominous thought would now and then flap its dusky wings about his head as they loitered along through thicket and greenhouse, for Fin-de-Siècle had fixed a most intent regard upon the Chatelaine and kept it there. Aurelia, never completely certain heretofore of exemption from a snub from this quarter, now found herself swiftly fading into nonentity. She undertook to revivify her own image in the mind of this contemptuous youth by reverting to certain episodes common to the Parisian experiences of them both; but some of these he ignored, and others he had forgotten, or had so far forgotten that it would be weariness to remember. Aurelia was willing, under certain conditions and for certain ends, to humble herself, but she was not quite ready yet to be humbled by anybody else, and she resolved to lie in wait until

occasion might hold out the prospect of solace to her mortified spirit.

Such an occasion offered itself almost immediately; perhaps you will say she made it. It was in the largest of the greenhouses, the central one, that she found an opportunity at once to reassert her own importance and to exalt still higher the already exalted Chatelaine. Under a great octagonal dome of glass, the nub and focus of Tempo-Rubato's horticultural endeavors, was set a small, stone-encircled pond, whose surface was half hidden by the big, flat, lustrous leaves of some rare plant which had brought all its energies to one surpassing focus of its own—a single great white flower of transcendent purity and splendor. Aurelia's hands at this very moment were cumbered with flowers which Tempo-Rubato had presented to her—flowers of but moderate rank, it is true, but distinguished by the giver and his giving; nor had the Chatelaine been altogether forgotten by the doting old Duke; but nothing like that prevented Aurelia from fixing a determined gaze on this one unique and precious blossom—a gaze that passed from Tempo-Rubato to the Chatelaine, and back again, but that began and ended in the center of the pond; a gaze wide with expectation and prophetic of demand. And then she spoke, with a slow and distinct deliberation. This magnificent flower, she said, had doubtless been waiting for the coming of the lady on whom it could properly be bestowed. Well, the lady was here (this with a bow toward the Chatelaine that was almost a reverence)—the Lady of La Trinité.

There was a slight pause, and in it was faintly heard

the whirring of the wings of panic. Tempo-Rubato gave a start and a short, nervous laugh, the Duke paled perceptibly, and the Duchess, with a moist fear in her eyes, laid a detaining hand upon her son's arm; even Fin-de-Siècle gave a quick little gasp. The Governor should have done as much, or more; but he simply looked in a fond, doting way upon the Chatelaine, as much intoxicated by this flattery, as much uplifted by a sense of coming triumph, as were he himself the principal—too sensitive to the fumes of the ideal to give due heed to the lees of the actual, however certain they were to remain behind. As for Aurelia, she realized pretty nearly, though not completely, what she was about; she had entered upon a splendid course of audacity, and this step was only a little longer and a little bolder than any preceding one. She honestly believed her friend conspicuously deserving of the best which could be offered; that blind old man had allowed his godchild to disparage herself too long, already.

Every one turned to the Chatelaine, but she made no effort to stay the execution of this high-handed decree. She was modest and reasonable enough, but she was too human to be above homage, and too inexperienced to interpret signs and tokens however open and abounding. She should have taken Tempo-Rubato's strained bow and forced smile, not as a sign of acquiescence eagerly courting encouragement, but as a plea for the averting of a ruthless sacrifice. She should have seen, from twenty indications, that this one flower was the apple of his parents' eyes, and that to pluck it was like quenching the flame in a light-

house, like snatching the halo from some saint. A month before she would have shrunk back from so marked an attention, but whiffs of a new atmosphere wafted from afar and laden with adulation now tickled her dilated nostrils; a claim made not by herself but by another on her behalf might surely hold; so she stood there quiet, smiling, acquiescent. If her look expressed anything, it expressed a wondering inquiry as to the reason for delay.

Tempo-Rubato set his teeth and moved toward the edge of the basin. Aurelia advanced a step and begged him not to inconvenience himself. To pluck the flower was a privilege, and nobody would appreciate this privilege more highly than Count Fin-de-Siècle; she begged that he would stand back in favor of his friend. But Fin-de-Siècle, thus suddenly brought forward, did not seem very successful in summoning up a look to express his sense of the honor. He glanced timorously at the turbid fluid as it revealed itself obscurely between the curled and huddled pads—a surface that gave no precise indication of depth, and positively no information as to the nature of the bottom, which was very likely to be both curving and slippery. The Governor chuckled and encouraged the young man's advance; it was not through fire and water that he was asked to go; hardly water alone—mud, rather; and it did not become him to stand too long trembling on the brink. Aurelia, with the mingling of the spiteful and the romantic, tauntingly assured him that every good and true knight held himself in readiness to obey the commands of the sex, and that promptness was half the

service. Tempo-Rubato gave audibility to a sardonic smile by means of a short, dry laugh, and laid a propelling hand on the shoulder of his hesitating friend. He himself was to be a victim, but there was some satisfaction in the thought that he was not to be the only one. He should suffer, indeed, but with dry feet and an unimpaired self-respect.

The Chatelaine received the flower with a gracious serenity. She did not lay too much stress on Fin-de-Siècle's ruined shoes and muddied trousers (he had been obliged to sink on one knee to escape falling flat on his back), nor did her eye dwell too long on the broken pads that remained floating about as witnesses of the struggle. Aurelia fixed a studiously indifferent gaze on a plebeian plant which occupied the nearest ledge, determined to exclude the noteworthy and the exceptional. The Duchess turned toward her son as if to ask what angel—what destroying angel—they were entertaining unaware. His glance in return seemed to imply the uselessness of denying that she *was* an angel when even the imps from the lower world acknowledged and proclaimed it.

The complacency of Miss West metamorphosed this dragonade into a tribute and a triumph; but she had always been taught to expect a great deal of the men, to express her expectations unreservedly, and to insist most rigorously upon their fulfilment. It was her fundamental belief that the young woman was the corner-stone of the social edifice—the *raison d'être* of society—almost its be-all and end-all; the spokes of the social wheel all focused in her; toward her every function worked, from her many a function

proceeded; she both guarded the gates and sat on the throne—at least that was the way it was in America. She knew that Americanization was the impending fate of Europe, and she felt that she must do her share in this great work. Why did she hold a string in her hand if she was not to pull it? Why neglect the cultivation of a precious bulb whose coming convolutions promised to outflower Flora herself?

In the meanwhile, she continued her collection of data with regard to remote and nebulous La Trinité. For remote and nebulous indeed was it coming to seem through the responses of its mistress, who met Aurelia's constant and confident interrogations with answers that seemed cold and meager and almost evasive. She seemed unable to squarely face Aurelia's ardent assumption that the splendors of the Vintschgau and the Brienza were to be equaled in a remote and lonely Alpine valley—that poor homely La Trinité was to rival Meran and Bellagio. She acknowledged her own château; an inn, too; a mill; a church; a certain number of châlets; but her responses were quite unadorned by details. As regarded her own habitation, she would confess to a turret or two (Aurelia had imagined a dozen); there was a window, yes, which might fitly be termed an oriel; as for a courtyard, there was a kind of inclosure near the stables which might as well be called that as anything else; and as for a driveway from the village up to her own grand portal (Aurelia's expression), there was a road on which a coach would be practicable, perhaps, though hardly necessary. With these meager particulars the poetess was obliged to content herself.

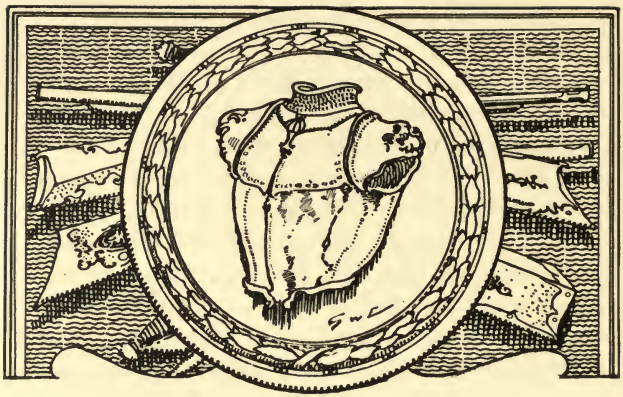
The matter of the divinity's material environment remained, then, in abeyance, but of the new spirit informing her the delighted Aurelia soon received a token convincing enough. It was near that little open place by the steamboat-landing on which opened the great gates of their own hotel—a place where splendid boatmen lounge with the effect of leaning up against side-scenes, where strapping young women kneel on the shore and cleanse their towels and table-cloths with a great whacking of wooden paddles and an immense sacrifice of soapsuds, and where lively little girls clatter along under the arcade in loose wooden slippers which only a miracle in constant force seems to keep on their feet. To this place the Chatelaine and her friend had descended from one of the steep and stony little lanes that mount the hillside, and were beguiling their leisure by a few infinitesimal purchases, when another pair came strolling along with a careless and leisurely gait—Tempo-Rubato and Mademoiselle Pasdenom. The Chatelaine was moving on toward a tiny shop before whose door hung several very neatly turned specimens of the cobbler's art in poplar wood and tinseled velveteen, but at a sign of greeting from the approaching pair she paused, and Aurelia was presently enabled to gage the amount of progress that had been made between Lucerne and Bellagio.

The Chatelaine had never crushed anybody before. She had never felt an impulse to do so, and she might not have been able to follow up such an impulse to a relentless consummation. But now, to Aurelia West —though Aurelia, remember, could sometimes see

more than there was to see—no one could have seemed more suddenly, more inflexibly determined to rend, to cast down, to trample upon, to annihilate—more unmistakably risen at last to an eminence which disclosed to her the full knowledge and significance of her place and her powers. But if the Chatelaine had taken an instant to reflect or to discriminate, she might have refrained from a full and ruthless exercise of those powers. The Duchess did, indeed, nod in a familiar fashion to Aurelia, but her manner toward Aurelia's companion was propitiatory, self-derogatory, almost appealing. Certainly, considering the company and the circumstances, this was no place for abject and groveling humility; she could hardly be expected to openly abase herself before Tempo-Rubato. But the Chatelaine was bursting with a capacious indignation—an indignation which even made Aurelia West seem less a victim to this woman than her fellow-conspirator—and she was far beyond the consideration of finely shaded details. She was of good height, taller than either her friend or her foe, and a sense of rectitude turned every inch to its fullest account. There was a great capacity for indignation in her full bosom, and for inflexibility in her squared shoulders. Her well-set, uplifted head was easily equal to the expression of a high degree of pride, and its slow turning to one side raised the expression even a degree higher still; while the nervous concentration of the play of her long fingers on her elbow remained a study for the fascinated Aurelia for a week afterward. Her nose, aquiline and cartilaginous—like those of a long line of ancestors, per-

sons of probity and consideration — seemed equal to the expression of any degree of scorn; and her eye, when unveiled, was the eye of the mountaineer, whose penetrating and hawk-like vision is never more steady and steely than when fixed on some small and remote object that is retiring to a remoteness greater still. And when she spoke, only a dozen words, she employed a primitive directness that startled and confounded.

The Duchess drooped. The careless and scornful little laugh that she attempted ended suddenly in something like a mortified sob. Tempo-Rubato — to fall back upon a convenient metaphor — placed an instant hand on the hilt of his sword, while the other devil, not the laughing one, began to glitter in his eye. He had not, perhaps, the clearest idea in the world in whose behalf the weapon was to be wielded, but it was foreign to his nature to play passively the part of spectator; choice of sides was not so urgent as exercise of activity. But there are times when the most eager warrior must chafe under inactivity, when even the brawniest arm is paralyzed by circumstance. For though the Chatelaine turned on him a lofty look which flashed him far beyond the pale of any possible alliance with her, it was a look whose fierceness forbade at the same time his open championship of the opposing side. However, she gave him scant opportunity for either. She passed rapidly on, and he was left to reflect (with a feeling of admiring wonder) that it was this girl whom he, only three months before, had presumed to treat with something but little removed from an amused and condescending indulgence.



X.

LA TRINITÉ: MIRAGE.

THE road up the Val Trinité begins with the suave and persuasive promise of chestnut and laurel, and ends, in actuality, with a dozen riven pines at the jagged and splintered base of a great glacier. The track runs between rugged slopes whose bases are littered with moss-covered boulders and with scaly rocks overgrown with thickets of rhododendrons, crosses and recrosses a brawling torrent whose excesses become more unbounded with the advance of every half-mile, and passes through a dozen scattered hamlets, whose inhabitants change almost imperceptibly from Italian to German, but whose names remain obstinately French. And it was over this road that a carriage

jolted one afternoon late in September, carrying the Chatelaine, her guest and her duenna—old Mamzelle Margot, who had conducted her charge from La Trinité to Neuchâtel, and who had now come down from the mountains to lead her home again.

The Chatelaine's home-coming was a very simple and unadorned affair, but it involved no particular disappointment to her romancing friend, who had fortunately prefigured that very little appreciation was to be expected from an uninstructed peasantry when so little had been accorded, within her easy recollection, by even the lights of the polite world. She knew, of course, what was right in this connection, what might properly be expected, demanded. Her intimate acquaintance with light opera and lighter fiction made it impossible for anything to quench her ideal—an ideal involving a gay and graceful commingling of festoons and arches, of bonfires and hurrahs, a complaisant and unanimous throng before the inn—a throng in gay bodices and sturdy leggings, a throng with a ready tendency to drink healths amid cheers and to flaunt gaily streaming ribbons with an airy abandon; but she was willing to accept whatever offered at present until enlightenment might dawn upon these well-disposed but uninformed mountaineers, and they could be shown what was to be done and given some idea of how to do it. It pleased her well enough, then, that a score of men, young and old, collected in the street should have parted for the passage of their vehicle and have ranged themselves almost involuntarily in two irregular lines and have uncovered with every evidence of respect and good-will.

It gave her considerable satisfaction, too, when a group of half a dozen little girls came trudging up to the château with a big nosegay of homely and belated flowers, and shuffled their feet with a helpless awkwardness until the Chatelaine's gracious acceptance relieved them of their embarrassment and sent them away with a proud and smiling satisfaction. Nor did she find it amiss when, the next morning, a wheezy old dame shuffled in with a basket of eggs and a pair of stockings of her own knitting. There was material in all this, and promise.

To the place itself she gave the same qualified approval. If position was half the battle, as she had heard, the battle was half won, for the château stood on a rugged eminence a hundred feet above the village, and commanded a wide sweep of snowy peaks which rose above serried ranks of somber pines. But that its own actual features, external and internal, were equal to crowning the campaign with victory was not so certain. Should she be able to produce any broad and taking effects in a place so small, so simple, so domestic, so generally practicable for the ordinary living of to-day? Could she hope for stateliness in apartments so circumscribed? Was there really any opportunity for the grandiose with furnishings so meager, so familiar? Would it be possible to produce any great impression with such a plain and homely little band of servants? Well, she must do the best she could.

She at once entered upon a deft and half-disguised course of manipulation. She advised, suggested, importuned, experimented. She changed, shifted, added,

took away, renovated, reconstructed, made new presentations and combinations. The Chatelaine, who now for the first time realized what a poor, plain place the home of her fathers really was, interposed no objections; she was quite willing to give full play to a genius who was so much better able than she herself to turn what there was to account; though Aurelia, now spurred on by the full frenzy of the creative spirit, would have exacted full play in any event.

It pained her to find that there was no portrait-gallery. This was one of the things on which her fancy had most fondly insisted, and she determined to make the omission good. There were four or five fair portraits hanging in the most accessible rooms in the lower part of the house, and a determined tour of inspection through various obscure and disused apartments yielded them three or four more, gratifyingly varied as to epoch. She even dragged an unwilling maid up to the eaves and garrets, where, thick with the dust of generations, she brought to light a pair of canvases which she proved to her own satisfaction to date back to the fore part of the seventeenth century. She begged the Chatelaine to allow all these pictures to be brought together in one room, and they spent the greater part of a day together in giving sequence and coherency to this motley collection. History, legend, anecdote, chronological probability, resemblance in nose and chin, the idle gossip and the cloudy recollection of old servants were all drawn on, and the proud Chatelaine went to bed that night with the family genealogy for seven or eight generations codified, solidified, actual to the eye of the flesh.

Aurelia next attempted an armory. The long record of gallantry and heroism that had culminated at the steamboat-landing at Bellagio deserved and demanded some visible, palpable token; she burned for a long avenue of fame hedged in with monumental stacks of greaves and corselets and pikes and lances crossed. Their search for portraits had developed several rusty old muskets and fowling-pieces, but a most rigid examination of the whole place from cellar to garret brought forth nothing in the way of armor beyond a battered old cuirass. Aurelia, thus balked in her pursuit of the stately, fell back on the picturesque. She arranged the fire-arms, along with the portraits, in a dingy but spacious apartment which still made a certain show in the way of wainscoting, and she associated with them the head of a chamois and also the head of a stag which she induced one of the hostlers to renovate. In this room, which she called the Great Hall, the cuirass was given a prominent place; she put this relic in facile association with one of the early portraits, and begged the Chatelaine to ascertain by book, document, or tradition at what great battle her heroic ancestor had worn it. They presently found a name and a date; within a week the new relative was firmly imbedded in the mind, the heart, and the memory of the last of the race; and before a fortnight had passed she had made a dozen facile but proud allusions to the great glory of her house.

Nor did Aurelia pause here. She revised the personnel of the place from Mamzelle Margot down. Mamzelle constituted something of a stumbling-block in the pathway of progress, and Aurelia employed con-

siderable finesse in her attempt to raise this sturdy and homely person to the grade of lady-companion. She established, too, a scheme of precedence among the maids; she ranked the stablemen and gardeners; and she spent considerable time and thought in contriving a suitable envelope for the Chatelaine herself. Using one of the Milan gowns as a basis, she created a costume which she succeeded in persuading this guileless girl was in the height of the present mode, but which was, indeed, only a discreet little variation of her own on the fashion of the High German Renaissance—of the days of Maximilian, in fact. It was a garb strongly marked by puffs at shoulder and elbow; it included a girdle from which hung a bunch of jangling keys, and it was finished by a close-fitting little cap of gold mesh worn well on the back of the head. It embodied the typical, the representative; it was a present token of power, importance, proprietorship, and when men and maids alike gazed on this new apparition with an admiring deference and awe as it trailed in slow state through hall and garden, Aurelia felt that she had not labored in vain.

The respite that followed these labors was not as long as their arduousness required, for word came shortly from the Governor, who had lingered behind at the lakes, that he should come on within a day or two, and should bring Zeitgeist with him. Aurelia immediately shifted the barrel and resumed her work at the crank. Her opening measure related to the conveyance of these visitors up the Val Trinité. They should be met, and met, too, with a more creditable equipage than the one which had been found waiting

for the Chatelaine and herself—an equipage for whose rusty harness and liveryless coachman she had chidden Margot as severely as she dared. She argued insistently from the past glories of the house the presence somewhere of some state coach or other, nor did she rest until, in a remote annex to the stables, she found a dusty and battered vehicle, whose faint traces of cracked carvings and dimmed gildings dated back to the old rococo days. She herself undertook the rehabilitation of the moth-eaten cushions; she insisted to Mamzelle Margot, temporarily reduced to her old position of housekeeper and general manager, that the harness must be furbished up; and she asked the Chatelaine what were the colors of the traditional livery of the house. So that when they drove down the valley to meet the Governor and his companion —Vittorio on the box, Franz and André up behind, and all three vivid in the facings that Aurelia's own needle had stitched into place—they offered a spectacle to which the scattered hamlets of the Val Trinité had had no parallel for sixty years—one that for the like of which only the oldest of the elder generation of peasantry had any place in their memories.

The Governor had once before visited La Trinité, some years back, and he was not slow in observing the changes that had come between. He had not been received then *en grand seigneur;* no flag had been flung out from the topmost turret (another of Aurelia's ideas) as they had passed upward from the village; nor had the natural simplicity and bonhomie of the place been obliged to force its expression through a cumbersome overlayer of stiff formalities. The primi-

tiveness of that early day compared with the ornate complexity of the present one as the naïve piping of strolling players compares with the strong, broad, determined chord that sometimes begins an overture. Aurelia West, he saw, had collected and organized the scattered potentialities of harmony, and was now leading them on with an irresistible sweep and with a keen eye that took in the whole semicircle from double-bass to kettle-drum; while the Chatelaine lay back with the pleased passivity of the lady-patroness in her loge.

But the Chatelaine's part presently became a more active one; she was led on to sing the leading rôle, and before an increased audience. When Mamzelle Margot came in one morning with the intelligence that two gentlemen were stopping below at the inn, Aurelia, whose powers of divination were quite equal to her powers of imagination, knew without the telling who they were. And when Tempo-Rubato and Fin-de-Siècle presented themselves in the dress of hunters, she did not need to be informed that they had worked their way along the mountains from the shooting-box above Bergamo, and that their ultimate destination was Paris.

The idea, of course, was Tempo-Rubato's. Fin-de-Siècle, since his discomfiture at Bellagio, had no desire to expose himself to any further risk, and he was finding their rough scramble over the mountains a good deal of an ordeal, being less the hunter than the mere urban sportsman. But Tempo-Rubato had pushed all opposition aside. He was determined upon once more seeing the Lady of La Trinité; the only person capa-

ble of interesting him was the one who could jog his imagination. No woman before had ever checked or cowed him; he would view the leopardess in her own lair.

The Chatelaine received the new-comers in that Great Hall which Aurelia West had created for her. Her air, to Tempo-Rubato, seemed full of a chill stateliness, yet hardly designed as the protest of injured dignity. The Chatelaine's indignation, in fact, had been much less directed against Tempo-Rubato than against the Pasdenom, and her forbidding aspect was now assumed principally as a help toward holding her own. She knew that her home, despite the embellishments of the revolutionary Aurelia, was a poor place still, and far beneath any possible comparison with the great houses that had entertained her, and she was relying less upon her material environment than upon her inner consciousness. The portraits, the trophies, and the hauteur of Aurelia gave her some support, it is true; but in the end she was herself, and that was enough.

The stage being set and the performers brought together, Aurelia now proceeded to the play. It was impossible to make this as impressive, as ambitious as she desired, but here, again, she should do her best. No great fête was possible — there was no one to summon. The only persons of any consideration that the community yielded were the priest and the schoolmaster, and the Chatelaine had no neighbors. But a dinner could easily be accomplished; the guests were already on hand. It must be small, but it should be too stately, too elaborate for any intrusion of the in-

formal, the familiar. The most satisfactory thing that Aurelia had found about La Trinité was its service of plate, and she arranged a menu fit for the dishes. It was drawn up on the best Parisian models, and was partly carried out by Aurelia's own efforts, for its succession of courses, with its divisions and subdivisions, went far beyond any notions entertained in regard to dining by Mamzelle Margot. Together they explored the cellar for wine in which the Chatelaine's health might be drunk—a ceremony for which the Governor (prompted by Aurelia) took the head of the table, and with alacrity. This attention the Chatelaine received with no false modesty, no self-deprecating shrinkings, but with a high and serious sense of acknowledging a just due.

Excursions followed. These were for the display of the new equipage, for which Aurelia designed a loftier career than that of mere omnibus. These drives, limited in number and in length by the weight of the vehicle and the roughness of the country, made it necessary to furnish saddle-horses for those who could find no place in the coach. A couple of animals, therefore, were sent up from their farm-work two or three miles down the valley, and when Aurelia referred to the party and its progresses she was accustomed to use the word "cavalcade." She probably had the word before she had the fact.

There were other excursions on foot. These led them to other valleys by rough and stony footpaths across rocky ridges, and over the vast glaciers, too, which the mountain sent down into the Chatelaine's own valley. On several of these expeditions it was

Aurelia's desire that her friend—most robust and tireless of walkers—should be transported in a chaise à porteurs—a novel experience for the Chatelaine, but one that having tried she was quite willing to repeat. Aurelia herself, lest she impair the Chatelaine's distinction by a duplication of her conveyance, tramped along on foot as best she might. But she took good care that Bertha had a cavalier on either side, that she should require a good deal of attention, and that she received it—all this to the curious wonder of Zeitgeist. The Chatelaine fell into this new pose quite easily; it did not seem very difficult for her to lean back among her cushions and nod and beckon and command. Merit must make its demands; humility received no recompense; a firm and high audacity not only obtained its dues, but in doing so set a higher standard for dues more exacting still. So one of her attendants would be despatched for milk to some châlet more or less inaccessible, another would be hurried forward a quarter of a mile to figure out the probabilities of some obscure path, and a third would be bound down to an exacting study of the relative positions of chair, sun, and parasol. Even Aurelia herself did not abstain from various little offices: the chief priestess, having niched the idol and drawn aside the curtain, was only too glad to rush out and lead the worship by her own prostrations.

To the very last it never occurred to this zealot to ask herself if her fellow-worshipers were really devotees, or, being such, to what high pitch their adoration might be pushed before zeal drooped to lassitude. She did not clearly bear in mind that Fin-de-Siècle was

rather a skeptic than a devotee, and that but little was needed to turn the skeptic into a scoffer; she did not perceive that Zeitgeist was no worshiper, but a cold, aloof-standing scholar and critic; she did not feel that Tempo-Rubato, while a possible worshiper, yet preferred to select his saint for himself and to follow his own rubric. So she went on, stifling the little band with the fumes of incense, deafening it with the clangor of bells, and driving the half-hearted converts to apostasy by the maddening monotone of her ritual of praise.

Presently came the first signs of relapse; the young men began to question each other. Where, asked Fin-de-Siècle, was that naïveté, so grateful to the jaded man of the world (he meant himself), the only thing capable of soothing his wearied spirit? What, asked Zeitgeist, had become of the sturdy helpfulness which had no need to make a man into a lackey, and which no person of sense and capability could undervalue? Whither, asked Tempo-Rubato, had vanished that simple innocence which even the greatest reprobate among men admired and respected beyond the vastest store of knowledge that woman could amass? No answers came. Zeitgeist (the others, too) inveighed bitterly, as more than once before, against the tyranny of sex—an importation now establishing itself in his own world. Fin-de-Siècle declared that he had canceled his last chapters, and hardly knew whether he should write others to take their place. What was more discouraging than to discover a supposedly new and lovely type, to fix it, and then to find in an altered light or from a shifted point of view but a re-expres-

sion of the old and the familiar? Things such as these, he moaned, drove the artist to despair. Tempo-Rubato sighed sincerely over this great and growing change, and when, on the occasion of their last reunion in the Chatelaine's drawing-room, he sang, in his own key,

"Spirito gentil, nei sogni miei
Brillasti un' dì e ti perdei,"

it was almost in the accents of elegy.

Yes, the time for passing on had come, and Aurelia, within a quarter of an hour after the ceasing of Tempo-Rubato's song, made her final coup. She advanced to the oriel and drew aside the curtain, and the same white moonlight that enveloped her flooded the town and the valley, and touched the great dome of the Mountain with a cold and ethereal pallor. She extended her hand toward those white and climbing slopes, and declared that a sprig of edelweiss brought thence by each of the three would please the castle's lady. And the Chatelaine, robed superbly in the creamy splendors of Milan, swept promptly into the moonlight's ken, and with stately acquiescence in her friend's suggestion announced that she should highly prize such parting tokens of regard.

There was an instant of silence—silence stabbed by surprise. Zeitgeist heard this almost incredulous and altogether indignant. He remembered that the Chatelaine had once plucked for herself a blossom from one of the lower of those slopes, nor had he forgotten the bruised knees and lacerated wrists that had resulted from his endeavors to gratify Miss West's propensity for inaccessible flora. Fin-de-Siècle started back al-

most appalled; they had made him ruin his trousers, and now they asked him to lay down his life. Tempo-Rubato gave a faint sigh of impatient protest; in this craze to exact tribute what malign promptings always suggested a tribute that was floral? The Chatelaine repeated her declaration, and announced that she should wish them godspeed as they sallied forth in the morning.

At daybreak there came the first faint fall of snow. At ten her guests set out.

Fin-de-Siècle's tribute was the first to reach La Trinité. It came from Paris. The petals of his flower were of spun silver; its heart was a pearl. The velvet case inclosing it was of the color of the Chatelaine's new liveries.

Zeitgeist's offering came next—from the Vintschgau. He sent not a single spray but a dozen, all carefully arranged, labeled, framed—a tablet to his own energy and daring. The dozen flowers were from a dozen different places—formidable peaks, shuddersome passes—but not one of them had been plucked within twenty miles of La Trinité.

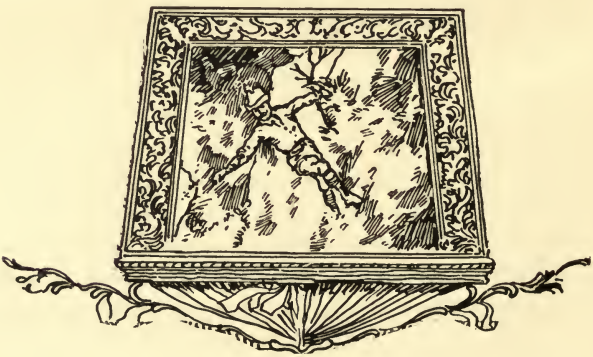
Last of all came Tempo-Rubato. He sent a painting, the work of his own hand. In the immediate foreground his edelweiss, the size of life, blossomed on the corner of a rocky and inaccessible ledge. The background presented in a marvelously small space a wide desolation of jagged peak and dazzling snowfield. In the middle distance a single figure—the Tempo-Rubato of the Lucerne steamer—appeared at a sudden rocky angle, but whether in advance or in retreat it was difficult to say. A wide, impassable chasm sepa-

rated him from the flower, but across it he seemed to flash a mocking smile of adieu.

Last summer a wayfarer, descended from the glacial fields above La Trinité, trudged downward through the valley. Some four or five miles below the château he passed a group of clever-looking young men, who were occupied with a three-legged instrument constructed of brass and mahogany, and who had left a trail of stakes behind them. Farther on he passed a group of laborers busy on an embankment that had come to dispute the passage with the brawling stream. A mile lower the gaunt form of a great iron truss spanned the river, and from beyond the jutting crag that closed the view came the muffled shriek of a steam-whistle. He went no farther.

In retracing his steps through La Trinité he paused at the inn, and looking up at the château inquired after its mistress.

She had left the valley. The Chatelaine—her way prepared, her path made straight—was now in Paris.



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